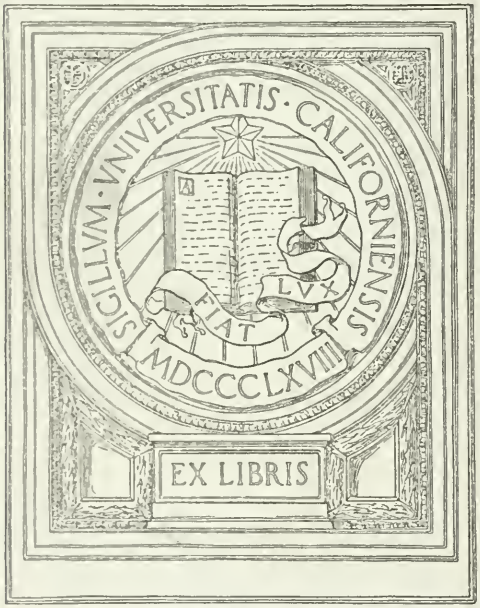
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
AT LOS ANGELES



THE

WORKS

Of the REVEREND

WILLIAM LAW, M.A.,

Sometime Fellow of *Emmanuel* College, *Cambridge.*

In Nine Volumes.

Volume IV.

A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life, adapted to the State and Condition of all Orders of Christians.

LONDON: Printed for J. RICHARDSON, 1762.
Privately Reprinted for G. MORETON, *Setley, Brockenhurst, New Forest, Hampshire.* 1893.

5037
L41
1892
v.4

Prefatory Advertisement.

A Serious Call
to a
Devout and Holy Life.

THE SERIOUS CALL to a Devout and Holy Life, is WILLIAM LAW'S fifth work in the order of publication, printed in the year 1729, when he was about forty-three years of age. It was written by him during the early portion of his ten years' residence with the *Gibbon* family at *Putney*, with whom he resided in the capacity of Spiritual Director, and by whom, as most readers know, he was greatly esteemed.

The 'Serious Call' is the most widely and generally known of all WILLIAM LAW'S works; and is undoubtedly his fame-piece: if not, as some think in a certain sense, his master-piece. It has passed through some hundreds of editions by various Publishers, from the year of its publication to the present time; and has, more than any other religious work, attracted—as it will ever continue to do—the notice and admiration, and its precepts the emulation, of successive generations of the wisest and best among men. Of such, various authoritative opinions have been quoted, in acknowledgment and support of the great excellence of this work: which excellence, the most ordinary reader may at once by its perusal, discern for himself.

It is supposed that the Character of 'Paternus' described in this work, was that of WILLIAM LAW'S father; and that 'Eusebia' represented his widowed-mother; but this is mere conjecture: both portraits, as that of 'Ouranius'—which is likewise supposed to be William Law himself—being, more probably, ideals of his own. These and other 'Characters,' are cleverly and humorously described—in particular that of 'Mundanus,' who 'has made a great figure in business,' which he has carried to its greatest improvement and perfection. 'The only 'one thing which has not fallen under his improvement nor re-'ceived any benefit from his judicious mind, is his devotion.

423483

'This is just in the same poor state it was when he was only six 'years of age, and the old man prays now in that little form of 'words which his mother used to hear him repeat night and 'morning. This *Mundanus*, who hardly ever saw the poorest 'utensil, or ever took the meanest trifle into his hand, without 'considering how it might be made or used to better advantage, 'has gone all his life long praying in the same manner as when 'he was a child without ever considering how much better or 'oftener he might pray. . . . If *Mundanus* sees a book of devo- 'tion he passes it by as he does a spelling-book, because he 'remembers that he learned to pray so many years ago under 'his mother when he learned to spell. . . .'

It will probably not escape the attention of the thoughtful reader that in Chapter XX., upon 'Intercessory Prayer,' WILLIAM LAW sets our duty towards our Neighbour—particularly towards such of whose reputation and manner of life *we* do not quite approve—in a new, and deeply instructive light—in a most impressive and logical passage, which it is remarkable should have been omitted from DR. WHYTE'S recently published Selections from Law's works.

In it WILLIAM LAW reminds us that when is 'let loose any 'ill-natured passion, either of hatred, or contempt, towards—as 'you suppose—an ill man, consider what you would think of 'another, who was doing the same towards a good man, and be 'assured that you are committing the same sin. You will per- 'haps say—How is it possible to love a good and a bad man, in 'the same degree? Just as it is possible to be as *just* and *faith-* '*ful* to a good man as to an evil man. Now are you in any 'difficulty about performing *justice* and *faithfulness* to a bad 'man? Are you in any doubts whether you need be so *just* and '*faithful* to him, as you need be to a good man? Now why is 'it that you are in no doubt about it? It is because you know 'that justice and faithfulness are founded upon reasons that never '*vary* or *change*, that have no dependence upon the *merits* of 'men, but are founded in the Nature of Things, in the Laws of 'God, and therefore are to be observed with an equal exactness 'towards good and bad men. Now do but think thus justly of 'Charity, or love to your Neighbour, that it is founded upon 'reasons, that *vary* not, that have no dependence upon the *merits* 'of men, and then you will find it as possible to perform the 'same *exact charity*, as the same *exact justice*, to all men, whether 'good or bad.'

G. B. M.

A

SERIOUS CALL

TO A

DEVOUT and HOLY LIFE.

ADAPTED TO

The State and Condition of all Orders of CHRISTIANS.

By *WILLIAM LAW*, M. A.

He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.
St. Luke viii. 8.

And behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with me. Rev. xxii. 12.

LONDON:
Printed for J. RICHARDSON, in *Pater-noster-Row*. 1729.

The Contents.

CHAPTER I.

CONCERNING the Nature and Extent of Christian Devotion . . . . . Page 7

CHAPTER II.

An Inquiry into the reason, why the generality of Christians *fall so far short of the Holiness and Devotion of Christianity* 15

CHAPTER III.

Of the great danger and folly of not intending to be as eminent and exemplary as we can, in the practice of all Christian virtues 21

CHAPTER IV.

We can please God in no state or condition of life, but by intending *and* devoting *it all to his honour and glory* 30

CHAPTER V.

Persons that are free from the necessity of labour and enployments, are to consider themselves as devoted to God in a higher degree 42

CHAPTER VI.

Containing the great obligations, and the great advantages of making a wise and religious use of our estates and fortunes 48

CHAPTER VII.

How the imprudent use of an estate *corrupts all the tempers of the mind, and fills the heart with poor and ridiculous passions through the whole course of life; represented in the character of* Flavia . Page 55

CHAPTER VIII.

How the wise and pious use of an Estate, naturally carrieth us to great perfection in all the virtues of the Christian Life; represented in the character of Miranda 61

CHAPTER IX.

Containing some reflections upon the life of Miranda; *and showing how it may, and ought to be imitated by all her sex* 70

CHAPTER X.

Showing how all orders and ranks of men and women of all ages, are obliged to devote themselves unto God 80

CHAPTER XI.

Showing how great devotion, fills our lives with the greatest peace and happiness that can be enjoyed in this life 93

CHAPTER XII.

The happiness of a life wholly devoted unto God, further proved, from the vanity, *the* sensuality *and the* ridiculous poor *enjoyments, which they are forced to take up with, who live according to their own humours. This represented in various characters* . . 106

CHAPTER XIII.

That not only a life of vanity, *or* sensuality, *but even the* most regular *kind of life, that is not governed by* great *devotion, sufficiently shows its* miseries, *its* wants, *and* emptiness, *to the eyes of all the world. This represented in various characters* . . . Page 117

CHAPTER XIV.

Concerning that part of Devotion which relates to times *and* hours of Prayer. *Of daily* early *prayer in the morning. How we are to improve our* forms *of Prayer, and how to increase the* spirit *of devotion* . . 128

CHAPTER XV.

Of chanting, or singing of Psalms in our private devotions. Of the excellency and benefit of this kind of devotion. Of the great effects it hath upon our hearts. Of the means of performing it in the best manner . . 146

CHAPTER XVI.

Recommending devotion at nine o'clock in the morning, called in Scripture the third hour *of the day. The subject of these prayers is humility* . . . 160

CHAPTER XVII.

Showing how difficult the practice of humility is made, by the general spirit and temper of the world. How Christianity requireth us to live contrary to the world 170

CHAPTER XVIII.

Showing how the education *which men generally receive in their youth, makes the doctrines of humility difficult to be practised. The spirit of a better education, represented in the character of* Paternus . . 180

CHAPTER XIX.

Showing how the method of educating daughters, *makes it difficult for them to enter into the spirit of Christian humility. How miserably they are injured and abused by such an education. The spirit of a better education represented in the charater of* Eusebia . Page 191

CHAPTER XX.

Recommending devotion at twelve o'clock, called in Scripture the sixth hour *of the day. This frequency of Devotion equally desirable by all orders of people.* Universal love *is here recommended to be the subject of prayer at this hour. Of intercession, as an act of universal love* 208

CHAPTER XXI.

Of the necessity and benefit of Intercession, *considered as an exercise of universal love. How all orders of men are to pray and intercede with God for one another. How naturally such intercession amends and reforms the heart of those that use it 226*

CHAPTER XXII.

Recommending Devotion at three o'clock, called in Scripture the ninth hour *of the day. The subject of prayer at this hour, is* resignation *to the divine pleasure. The nature and duty of conformity to the will of God in all our actions and designs 241*

CHAPTER XXIII.

Of Evening prayer. Of the nature and necessity of examination. How we are to be particular in the confession of all our sins. How we are to fill our minds with a just horror and dread of all sin . . 251

CHAPTER XXIV.

The Conclusion. Of the Excellency and Greatness of a devout Spirit 263

A

SERIOUS CALL

TO A

Devout *and* Holy Life.

Chapter I.

Concerning the Nature and Extent of Christian Devotion.

DEVOTION is neither *private* nor *public* Prayer, but Prayers whether private or public, are particular parts or instances of Devotion. Devotion signifies a life given, or *devoted* to God.

He therefore is the devout man, who lives no longer to his own *will*, or the *way* and *spirit* of the world, but to the sole will of God, who considers God in everything, who serves God in everything, who makes all the parts of his *common* life, parts of piety, by doing everything in the name of God, and under such rules as are conformable to his Glory.

We readily acknowledge, that God alone is to be the rule and measure of our *Prayers;* that in them we are to look *wholly* unto him, and act wholly for him; that we are only to pray in *such a manner*, for *such things*, and *such ends*, as are suitable to his Glory.

Now let anyone but find out the reason, why he is to be thus strictly pious in his prayers, and he will find the same as strong a reason, to be as strictly pious in all the other parts of his life. For there is not the least shadow of a reason, why we should make God the *rule* and *measure* of our prayers; why we should then look *wholly* unto him, and pray according to his will; but what equally proves it necessary for us to look *wholly* unto God, and make him the *rule* and *measure* of all the other actions of our life. For any ways of life, any employment of our talents, whether of our *parts*, our *time*, or *money*, that is not *strictly* according to the will of God, that is not for such *ends* as are suitable to his glory, are as great *absurdities* and *failings*, as prayers

that are not according to the will of God. For there is no other reason, why our prayers should be according to the will of God, why they should have nothing in them, but what is *wise*, and *holy*, and *heavenly*, there is no other reason for this, but that our lives may be of the same nature, full of the same *wisdom*, *holiness*, and *heavenly* tempers, that we may *live* unto God in the *same spirit* that we pray unto him. Were it not our strict duty to live by *reason*, to devote *all* the actions of our lives to God, were it not absolutely necessary to walk before him in wisdom and holiness and all heavenly conversation, doing everything in his name, and for his glory, there would be no excellency or wisdom in the most *heavenly prayers*. Nay, such prayers would be absurdities, they would be like Prayers for *wings*, when it was no part of our duty to *fly*.

As sure, therefore, as there is any wisdom in praying for the spirit of God, so sure is it, that we are to make that Spirit the rule of *all* our actions; as sure as it is our duty to look *wholly* unto God in our Prayers, so sure is it, that it is our duty to live *wholly* unto God in our lives. But we can no more be said to live unto God, unless we live unto him in all the *ordinary* actions of our life, unless he be the rule and measure of all our ways, than we can be said to pray unto God, unless our Prayers look *wholly* unto him. So that unreasonable and absurd ways of life, whether in *labour* or *diversion*, whether they consume our *time*, or our *money*, are alike unreasonable and absurd Prayers, and are as truly an offence unto God.

'Tis for want of knowing, or at least considering this, that we see such a *mixture* of Ridicule in the lives of many People. You see them strict as to some *times* and *places* of Devotion, but when the service of the *Church* is over, they are but like those who seldom or never come there. In their way of life, their manner of spending their *time* and *money*, in their *cares* and *fears*, in their *pleasures* and *indulgences*, in their labour and diversions, they are like the rest of the world. This makes the loose part of the world generally make a jest of those who are *devout*, because they see their Devotion goes no further than their *Prayers*, and that when they are over, they live no more unto God, till the time of Prayer returns again; but live by the same *humour* and *fancy*, and in as full an enjoyment of all the *follies* of life as other People. This is the reason why they are the jest and scorn of careless and worldly People; not because they are really devoted to God, but because they appear to have no other Devotion, but that of *occasional Prayers*.

Julius is very fearful of missing Prayers; all the Parish supposes *Julius* to be sick, if he is not at *Church*. But if you were

to ask him why he spends the rest of his time by *humour* and *chance?* why he is a companion of the silliest People in their most *silly pleasures?* why he is ready for every impertinent entertainment and diversion? If you were to ask him why there is no amusement too trifling to please him? why he is busy at all *balls* and *assemblies?* why he gives himself up to an *idle gossiping* conversation? why he lives in foolish friendships and fondness for particular persons, that neither want nor deserve any particular kindness? why he allows himself in foolish hatreds and resentments against particular persons, without considering that he is to love everybody as himself? If you ask him why he never puts his *conversation*, his *time*, and *fortune*, under the rules of Religion, *Julius* has no more to say for himself, than the most disorderly Person. For the whole tenor of Scripture lies as directly against such a life, as against *debauchery* and *intemperance:* He that lives in such a course of *idleness* and *folly*, lives no more according to the Religion of Jesus Christ, than he that lives in gluttony and intemperance.

If a man were to tell *Julius* that there was no occasion for so much constancy at Prayers, and that he might, without any harm to himself, neglect the service of the Church, as the generality of People do, *Julius* would think such a one to be no Christian, and that he ought to avoid his company. But if a person only tells him, that he may live as the generality of the world does, that he may enjoy himself as others do, that he may spend his *time* and *money* as People of fashion do, that he may conform to the follies and frailties of the generality, and gratify his tempers and passions as most People do, *Julius* never suspects that man to want a Christian spirit, or that he is doing the devil's work.

And if *Julius* were to read all the New Testament from the beginning to the end, he would find his course of life condemned in every page of it.

And indeed there cannot anything be imagined more absurd in itself, than *wise* and *sublime*, and *heavenly* Prayers, added to a life of *vanity* and *folly*, where neither *labour* nor *diversions*, neither *time* nor *money*, are under the direction of the wisdom and heavenly tempers of our Prayers. If we were to see a man pretending to act *wholly* with regard to God in everything that he did, that would neither spend time or money, or take any labour or diversion, but so far as he could act according to strict principles of reason and piety, and yet at the same time neglect *all Prayer*, whether public or private, should we not be amazed at such a man, and wonder how he could have so much folly along with so much religion?

Yet this is as reasonable, as for any person to pretend to strict-

ness in *Devotion*, to be careful of observing *times* and *places* of Prayer, and yet letting the rest of his life, his *time*, and *labour*, his *talents* and *money*, be disposed of without any regard to strict rules of Piety and Devotion. For it is as great an absurdity to suppose holy Prayers, and divine Petitions without an holiness of life suitable to them, as to suppose an holy and divine life without Prayers.

Let anyone therefore think, how easily he could confute a man that pretended to great strictness of Life without Prayer, and the same Arguments will as plainly confute another, that pretends to *strictness* of *Prayer*, without carrying the same strictness into every other part of life. For to be weak and foolish in spending our *time* and *fortune*, is no greater a mistake, than to be weak and foolish in relation to our *Prayers*. And to allow ourselves in any ways of life that neither are, nor can be offered to God, is the same irreligion, as to neglect our Prayers, or use them in such a manner, as makes them an offering unworthy of God.

The short of the matter is this, either Reason and Religion prescribe *rules* and *ends* to all the ordinary actions of our life, or they do not: If they do, then it is as necessary to govern all our actions by those rules, as it is necessary to worship God. For if Religion teaches us anything concerning *eating* and *drinking*, or spending our *time* and *money*; if it teaches us how we are to *use* and *contemn* the world; if it tells us what tempers we are to have in *common* life, how we are to be disposed towards all people, how we are to behave towards the *sick*, the *poor*, the *old* and *destitute*; if it tells us whom we are to treat with a *particular* love, whom we are to regard with a particular esteem; if it tells us how we are to treat our enemies, and how we are to mortify and deny ourselves, he must be very weak, that can think these parts of Religion are not to be observed with as much *exactness*, as any doctrines that relate to Prayers.

It is very observable, that there is not one command in all the Gospel for *Public Worship*; and perhaps it is a duty that is least insisted upon in Scripture of any other. The frequent attendance at it is never so much as mentioned in all the New Testament. Whereas that *Religion* or *Devotion* which is to govern the *ordinary actions* of our life, is to be found in almost every verse of Scripture. Our blessed Saviour and his Apostles are wholly taken up in Doctrines that relate to *common life*. They call us to renounce the world, and differ in every *temper* and *way* of life, from the spirit and way of the world: to renounce all its goods, to fear none of its evils, to reject its joys, and have no value for its happiness: to be as new *born babes*, that are born

into a new state of things; to live as *Pilgrims* in spiritual watching, in holy fear, and heavenly aspiring after another life: to take up our daily cross, to deny ourselves, to profess the blessedness of mourning, to seek the blessedness of poverty of spirit: to forsake the pride and vanity of Riches, to take no thought for the morrow, to live in the profoundest State of Humility, to rejoice in worldly sufferings: to reject the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life; to bear injuries, to forgive and bless our enemies, and to love mankind as God loveth them: to give up our whole hearts and affections to God, and strive to enter through the strait gate into a life of eternal Glory.

This is the *common Devotion* which our Blessed Saviour taught, in order to make it the *common life* of all Christians. Is it not therefore exceeding strange, that People should place so much piety in the attendance upon public worship, concerning which there is not one precept of our Lord's to be found, and yet neglect these common duties of our *ordinary* life, which are commanded in every Page of the Gospel? I call these duties the devotion of our *common life*, because if they are to be practised, they must be made parts of our common life, they can have no place anywhere else.

If *contempt* of the world and *heavenly* affection, is a necessary temper of Christians, it is necessary that this temper appear in the whole course of their lives, in their manner of using the world, because it can have no place anywhere else.

If *self-denial* be a condition of salvation, all that would be saved, must make it a part of their *ordinary* life. If *humility* be a Christian duty, then the common life of a Christian, is to be a constant course of humility in all its kinds. If *poverty of spirit* be necessary, it must be the spirit and temper of *every day* of our lives. If we are to *relieve* the naked, the sick, and the prisoner, it must be the common charity of our lives, as far as we can render ourselves able to perform it. If we are to *love our enemies*, we must make our common life a visible exercise and demonstration of that love. If *content* and *thankfulness*, if the patient bearing of evil be duties to God, they are the Duties of every Day, and in every circumstance of our life. If we are to be wise and holy as the new-born sons of God, we can no otherwise be so, but by renouncing everything that is foolish and vain in every part of our common life. If we are to be in Christ *new creatures*, we must show that we are so, by having *new ways* of living in the world. If we are to *follow* Christ, it must be in our common way of spending every day.

Thus it is in all the virtues and holy tempers of Christianity,

they are not *ours* unless they be the virtues and tempers of our *ordinary life.* So that Christianity is so far from leaving us to live in the common ways of life, conforming to the folly of customs, and gratifying the passions and tempers which the spirit of the world delights in, it is so far from indulging us in any of these things, that all its virtues which it makes necessary to salvation, are only so many ways of living above, and contrary to the world in all the common actions of our life. If our common life is not a common course of *humility*, *self-denial*, *renunciation* of the world, *poverty* of spirit, and *heavenly* affection, we do not live the lives of Christians.

But yet though it is thus plain, that this, and this alone is Christianity, an uniform open and visible practice of all these virtues, yet it is as plain, that there is little or nothing of this to be found, even amongst the better sort of People. You see them often at Church, and pleased with fine preachers, but look into their lives, and you see them just the same sort of People as others are, that make no pretences to devotion. The difference that you find betwixt them, is only the difference of their natural tempers. They have the same *taste* of the world, the same worldly *cares*, and *fears*, and *joys;* they have the same *turn* of mind, equally *vain* in their desires. You see the same fondness for *state* and *equipage*, the same *pride* and vanity of *dress*, the same *self-love* and *indulgence*, the same foolish *friendships*, and groundless *hatreds*, the same *levity* of mind, and *trifling* spirit, the same *fondness* for diversions, the same idle dispositions, and vain ways of spending their time in visiting and conversation, as the rest of the world, that make no pretences to devotion.

I do not mean this comparison betwixt People seemingly good, and professed *rakes*, but betwixt People of sober lives. Let us take an instance in two modest Women: let it be supposed, that one of them is careful of times of Devotion, and observes them through a sense of duty, and that the other has no hearty concern about it, but is at Church seldom or often, just as it happens. Now it is a very easy thing to see this difference betwixt these persons. But when you have seen this, can you find any further difference betwixt them? Can you find that their *common life* is of a different kind? Are not the *tempers*, and *customs*, and *manners* of the one, of the same kind as of the other? Do they live as if they belonged to different worlds, had different views in their heads, and different rules and measures of all their actions? Have they not the same *goods* and *evils*, are they not pleased and displeased in the *same manner*, and for the same things? Do they not live in the same

course of life? Does one seem to be of this world, looking at the things that are temporal, and the other to be of another world, looking wholly at the things that are eternal? Does the one live in pleasure, delighting herself in *show* or *dress*, and the other live in *self-denial* and *mortification*, renouncing everything that looks like vanity, either of *person*, *dress*, or *carriage?* Does the one follow *public diversions*, and trifle away her time in *idle* visits, and *corrupt* conversation, and does the other study all the arts of improving her time, living in Prayer and Watching, and such good works, as may make all her time turn to her advantage, and be placed to her account at the last day? Is the one careless of expense, and glad to be able to adorn herself with every costly ornament of dress, and does the other consider her fortune as a talent given her by God, which is to be improved religiously, and no more to be spent in vain and needless ornaments, than it is to be buried in the earth?

Where must you look, to find one Person of Religion differing in this manner, from another that has none? And yet if they do not differ in these things which are here related, can it with any sense be said, the one is a *good* Christian, and the other not?

Take another instance amongst the men. *Leo* has a great deal of good nature, has kept what they call *good* company, hates everything that is *false* and *base*, is very generous and brave to his friends, but has concerned himself so little with Religion, that he hardly knows the difference betwixt a *Jew* and a *Christian.*

Eusebius on the other hand, has had early impressions of Religion, and buys books of Devotion. He can talk of all the *feasts* and *fasts* of the Church, and knows the *names* of most men that have been eminent for piety. You never hear him swear, or make a loose jest, and when he talks of Religion, he talks of it, as of a matter of the last concern.

Here you see, that one person has Religion enough, according to the way of the world, to be reckoned a *pious Christian*, and the other is so far from all appearance of Religion, that he may fairly be reckoned a *Heathen;* and yet if you look into their *common life*, if you examine their *chief* and *ruling* tempers in the greatest *articles* of life, or the greatest *doctrines* of Christianity, you will find the least difference imaginable.

Consider them with regard to the use of the world, because that is what everybody can see.

Now to have right *notions* and *tempers* with relation to this world, is as essential to religion, as to have right notions of God. And it is as possible for a man to worship a *Crocodile*,

and yet be a *pious man*, as to have his affections set upon this world, and yet be a *good Christian*.

But now if you consider *Leo* and *Eusebius* in this respect, you will find them exactly alike, *seeking*, *using*, and *enjoying* all that can be got in this world in the same manner, and for the same ends. You will find that *riches*, *prosperity*, *pleasures*, *indulgences*, *state*, *equipage*, and *honour*, are just as much the happiness of *Eusebius* as they are of *Leo*. And yet if Christianity has not changed a man's mind and temper with relation to these things, what can we say that it has done for him?

For if the doctrines of Christianity were practised, they would make a man as different from other people as to all *worldly* tempers, *sensual* pleasures, and the *pride* of life, as a *wise* man is different from a *natural;* it would be as easy a thing to know a Christian by his *outward course* of life, as it is now difficult to find anybody that lives it. For it is notorious, that Christians are now not only like other men in their *frailties* and *infirmities*, this might be in some degree excusable, but the complaint is, they are like *Heathens* in all the *main* and *chief articles* of their lives. They enjoy the world, and live every day in the same tempers, and the same designs, and the same indulgences, as they do who know not God, nor of any happiness in another life. Everybody who is capable of any reflection, must have observed, that this is generally the state even of devout people, whether *men* or *women*. You may see them different from other people, so far as to *times* and *places* of prayer, but generally like the rest of the world in all the other parts of their lives. That is, adding *Christian* Devotion to a *Heathen* life: I have the authority of our Blessed Saviour for his remark, where he says, 'Take no thought, saying what shall 'we eat, or what shall we drink, or wherewithal shall we be 'clothed? for after all these things do the Gentiles seek.' But if to be thus affected even with the necessary things of this life, shows that we are not yet of a *Christian Spirit*, but are like the *Heathens*, surely to enjoy the vanity and folly of the world as they did, to be like them in the main chief tempers of our lives, in self-love and indulgence, in sensual pleasures and diversions, in the vanity of dress, the love of show and greatness, or any other gaudy distinctions of fortune, is a much greater sign of a *heathen* temper. And consequently, they who add Devotion to such a life, must be said to *pray* as *Christians*, but *live* as *heathens*.

Chapter II.

An inquiry into the Reason, why the generality of Christians *fall so far short of the Holiness and Devotion of Christianity.*

IT may now be reasonably inquired, how it comes to pass, that the lives even of the better sort of people, are thus strangely contrary to the principles of Christianity?

But before I give a direct answer to this, I desire it may also be inquired, how it comes to pass that *swearing* is so common a vice amongst Christians? It is indeed not *yet* so common amongst *women*, as it is amongst *men*. But amongst men this sin is so common, that perhaps there are more than *two* in *three* that are guilty of it through the whole course of their lives, swearing *more* or *less*, just as it happens, some constantly, others only now and then as it were by chance. Now, I ask how comes it, that two in three of the men are guilty of so gross and profane a sin as this is? There is neither ignorance, nor human infirmity to plead for it: It is against an express commandment, and the most plain Doctrine of our blessed Saviour.

Do but now find the reason why the generality of men live in this notorious vice, and then you will have found the reason why the generality even of the better sort of people, live so contrary to Christianity.

Now the reason of common swearing is this, it is because men have not so much as the *intention to please God in all their actions*. For let a man but have so much piety as to *intend to please God in all the actions of his life, as the happiest and best thing in the world*, and then he will never swear more. It will be as impossible for him to swear, whilst he feels *this intention* within himself, as it is impossible for a man who intends to please his Prince, to go up and abuse him to his face.

It seems but a small and necessary part of piety to have such a *sincere intention* as this; and that he has no reason to look upon himself as a Disciple of Christ, who is not thus far advanced in piety. And yet it is purely for want of this degree of piety, that you see such a mixture of sin and folly in the lives even of the better sort of People. It is for want of this *intention*, that you see men who profess religion, yet live in *swearing* and *sensuality;* that you see *Clergymen* given to pride and covetous-

ness, and worldly enjoyments. It is for want of this *intention*, that you see *women* who profess Devotion, yet living in all the folly and vanity of *dress*, wasting their time in *idleness* and *pleasures*, and in all such instances of state and equipage as their estates will reach. For let but a woman feel her heart full of *this intention*, and she will find it as impossible to *patch* or *paint*, as to curse or swear; she will no more desire to shine at *Balls* and *Assemblies*, or make a figure amongst those who are most finely dressed, than she will desire to dance upon a *Rope* to please Spectators: She will know, that the one is as far from the *wisdom* and *excellency* of the Christian Spirit, as the other.

It was this *general intention*, that made the *primitive Christians* such eminent instances of piety, that made the goodly fellowship of the *saints*, and all the glorious army of *martyrs* and *confessors*. And if you will here stop, and ask yourself, why you are not as pious as the primitive Christians were, your own heart will tell you, that it is neither through *ignorance*, nor *inability*, but purely because you never *thoroughly intended* it. You observe the same *Sunday-worship* that they did; and you are *strict* in it, because it is your full *intention* to be so. And when you as fully intend to be like them in their *ordinary common* life, when you intend to please God in *all your actions*, you will find it as possible, as to be strictly exact in the service of the Church. And when you have this *intention to please God in all your actions, as the happiest and best thing in the world*, you will find in you as great an aversion to everything that is *vain* and *impertinent* in common life, whether of business or pleasure, as you now have to anything that is *profane*. You will be as fearful of living in any foolish way, either of spending your *time*, or your *fortune*, as you are now fearful of neglecting the public Worship.

Now, who that wants this general sincere *intention*, can be reckoned a Christian? And yet if it was amongst Christians, it would change the whole face of the world; true piety, and exemplary holiness, would be as common and visible, as *buying* and *selling*, or any trade in life.

Let a *Clergyman* but be thus *pious*, and he will *converse* as if he had been brought up by an *Apostle;* he will no more think and talk of *noble preferment*, than of *noble eating*, or a *glorious chariot*. He will no more complain of the *frowns* of the *world*, or a *small cure*, or the want of a *patron*, than he will complain of the want of a *laced coat*, or a *running horse*. Let him but *intend to please God, in all his actions*, as *the happiest and best thing in the world*, and then he will know, that there is nothing *noble* in a Clergyman, but a burning zeal for the salvation of souls;

nor anything poor in his profession, but *idleness* and a *worldly* Spirit.

Again, let a *Tradesman* but have this *intention*, and it will make him a saint in his *shop;* his every-day business will be a course of wise and reasonable actions, made holy to God, by being done in obedience to his will and pleasure. He will *buy* and *sell*, and *labour* and travel, because by so doing he can do some good to himself and others. But then, as nothing can please God but what is wise, and reasonable, and holy, so he will neither buy nor sell, nor labour in any other *manner*, nor to any other *end*, but such as may be shown to be *wise*, and *reasonable*, and *holy*. He will therefore consider, not what arts, or methods, or application will soonest make him richer and greater than his brethren, or remove him from a *shop* to a life of *state* and *pleasure;* but he will consider what arts, what methods, what application can make worldly business most acceptable to God, and make a life of trade a life of holiness, devotion, and piety. This will be the temper and spirit of every tradesman; he cannot stop short of these degrees of piety, whenever it is his *intention to please God in all his actions, as the best and happiest thing in the world.*

And on the other hand, whoever is not of this spirit and temper in his *trade* and *profession*, and does not carry it on only so far as is best subservient to a wise, and holy, and heavenly life; it is certain that he has not this *intention;* and yet without it, who can be shown to be a follower of Jesus Christ?

Again, let the *Gentleman* of birth and fortune but have this *intention*, and you will see how it will carry him from every appearance of evil, to every instance of piety and goodness. He cannot live by *chance*, or as *humour* and fancy carry him, because he knows that nothing can please God but a wise and regular course of life. He cannot live in *idleness* and *indulgence*, in *sports* and *gaming*, in pleasures and intemperance, in vain expenses and high living, because these things cannot be turned into means of piety and holiness, or made so many parts of a wise and religious life.

As he thus removes from all appearance of evil, so he hastens and aspires after every instance of goodness. He does not ask what is *allowable* and *pardonable*, but what is *commendable* and *praiseworthy*. He does not ask, whether God will forgive the *folly* of our lives, the *madness* of our pleasures, the *vanity* of our expenses, the richness of our *equipage*, and the careless consumption of our *time;* but he asks, whether God is pleased with these things, or whether these are the appointed ways of gaining his favour? He does not inquire, whether it be pardonable

to hoard up money, to adorn ourselves with diamonds, and gild our chariots, whilst the *widow* and the *orphan*, the *sick* and the *prisoner*, want to be relieved; but he asks, whether God has required these things at our hands, whether we shall be called to account at the last day for the neglect of them; because it is not his intent to live in such ways as, for aught we know, God may *perhaps* pardon; but to be diligent in such ways, as we know, that God will *infallibly* reward.

He will not therefore look at the lives of Christians, to learn how he ought to spend his estate, but he will look into the Scriptures, and make every *doctrine*, *parable*, *precept*, or *instruction*, that relates to rich men, a *law* to himself in the use of his estate.

He will have nothing to do with costly apparel, because the rich man in the Gospel was 'clothed with purple and fine linen.' He denies himself the *pleasures* and *indulgences* which his estate could procure, because our blessed Saviour saith, 'Woe unto you 'that are rich, for ye have received your consolation.' He will have but *one rule* for charity, and that will be, to spend *all* that he can that way, because the judge of quick and dead hath said, that all that is so given, is given to him.

He will have no *hospitable table* for the rich and wealthy to come and feast with him, in good eating and drinking; because our blessed Lord saith, 'When thou makest a dinner, call not 'thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor thy 'rich neighbours, lest they also bid thee again, and a recompense 'be made thee. But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, 'the maimed, the lame, the blind, and thou shalt be blessed. 'For they cannot recompense thee; for thou shalt be recom-'pensed at the resurrection of the just.'*

He will waste no money in gilded roofs, or costly furniture: He will not be carried from pleasure to pleasure, in expensive state and equipage, because an inspired Apostle hath said, that 'all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the 'eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the 'world.'

Let not anyone look upon this as an imaginary description of charity, that looks fine in the notion, but cannot be put in practice. For it is so far from being an imaginary impracticable form of life, that it has been practised by great numbers of Christians in former ages, who were glad to turn their whole estates into a constant course of charity. And it is so far from being impossible now, that if we can find any Christians, that

* Luke xiv. 12-14.

sincerely *intend to please God in all their actions, as the best and happiest thing in the world,* whether they be young or old, single or married, men or women, if they have but this *intention*, it will be impossible for them to do otherwise. This one principle will infallibly carry them to the height of charity, and they will find themselves unable to stop short of it.

For how is it possible for a man that *intends* to please God in the use of his *money*, and intends it because he judges it to be his *greatest happiness*, how is it possible for such a one, in such a state of mind, to bury his money in *needless*, *impertinent* finery, in covering himself or his *horses* with gold, whilst there are any works of piety and charity to be done with it, or any ways of spending it well?

This is as strictly impossible, as for a man who intends to please God in his *words*, to go into company on purpose to *swear* and *lie*. For as all waste and unreasonable expense is done *designedly*, and with *deliberation*, so no one can be guilty of it, whose *constant intention* is to please God in the use of his *money*.

I have chosen to explain this matter, by appealing to this *intention*, because it makes the case so plain, and because everyone who has a mind, may see it in the clearest light, and feel it in the strongest manner, only by looking into his own Heart. For it is as easy for every person to know, whether he *intends* to please God in *all* his actions; as for any *servant* to know, whether this be his intention towards his *master*. Everyone also can as easily tell how he lays out his money, and whether he considers how to please God in it, as he can tell where his estate is, and whether it be in *money* or *land*. So that there is no plea left for *ignorance* or *frailty*, as to this matter, everybody is in the *light*, and everybody has *power*. And no one can fail, but he who is not so much a Christian, as to *intend* to please God in the use of his estate.

You see two persons, one is regular in *public* and *private* Prayer, the other is not. Now the reason of this difference is not this, that one has *strength* and *power* to observe Prayer, and the other has not; but the reason is this, that one *intends to please* God in the *duties* of Devotion, and the other has no intention about it. Now the case is the same, in the right or wrong use of our *time* and *money*. You see one person throwing away his time in *sleep* and *idleness*, in *visiting* and *diversions*, and his money in the most vain and unreasonable expenses. You see another careful of every day, dividing his hours by rules of Reason and Religion, and spending all his money in works of charity; now the difference is not owing to this, that one has

strength and power to do thus, and the other has not; but it is owing to this, that one *intends to please God* in the right use of all his *time*, and all his *money*, and the other has no intention about it.

Here therefore let us judge ourselves sincerely, let us not vainly content ourselves with the common disorders of our lives, the *vanity* of our expenses, the *folly* of our diversions, the *pride* of our habits, the *idleness* of our lives, and the *wasting* of our time, fancying that these are *such imperfections* as we fall into through the unavoidable *weakness* and *frailty* of our natures; but let us be assured, that these disorders of our *common* life are owing to this, that we have not so much Christianity, as *to intend to please God in all the actions of our life, as the best and happiest thing in the world.* So that we must not look upon ourselves in a state of common and pardonable imperfection, but in such a state, as wants the *first* and *most fundamental* principle of Christianity, *viz., an intention to please God in all our actions.*

And if anyone were to ask himself, how it comes to pass, that there are any *degrees* of sobriety which he neglects, any *practices* of humility which he wants, any *method* of charity which he does not follow, any *rules* of redeeming time which he does not observe, his own heart will tell him, that it is because he never *intended* to be so exact in those duties. For whenever we fully intend it, it is as possible to conform to all this *regularity* of life, as it is possible for a man to observe *times* of Prayer.

So that the fault does not lie here, that we desire to be good and perfect, but through the weakness of our nature fall short of it; but it is, because we have not piety enough to *intend* to be as good as we can, or to please God in *all the actions* of our life. This we see is plainly the case of him who spends his time in *sports*, when he should be at *Church;* it is not his want of power, but his want of *intention*, or desire to be there.

And the case is plainly the same in every other folly of human life. *She* that spends her time and money in the unreasonable ways and fashions of the world, does not do so, because she wants power to be wise and religious in the management of her time and money, but because she has no *intention* or desire of being so. When she feels this intention, she will find it as possible to act up to it, as to be strictly *sober* and *chaste*, because it is her care and desire to be so.

This doctrine does not suppose, that we have no need of divine grace, or that it is in our own power to make ourselves perfect. It only supposes, that through the want of a *sincere* intention of pleasing God in *all our actions*, we fall into such irregularities of life, as by the *ordinary* means of grace, we should have power to avoid.

And that we have not that perfection, which our present state of grace makes us capable of, because we do not so much as *intend* to have it.

It only teaches us, that the reason why you see no *real* mortification, or self-denial, no *eminent* charity, no *profound* humility, no *heavenly* affection, no *true* contempt of the world, no *Christian* meekness, no *sincere* zeal, no *eminent* piety in the *common lives* of Christians, is this, because they do not so much as *intend to be exact and exemplary* in these virtues.

Chapter III.

Of the great danger and folly, of not intending *to be as eminent and exemplary as we can, in the practice of all Christian virtues.*

ALTHOUGH the goodness of God, and his rich mercies in Christ Jesus, are a sufficient assurance to us, that he will be merciful to our unavoidable weaknesses and infirmities, that is, to such failings as are the effects of *ignorance* or *surprise;* yet we have no reason to expect the same mercy towards those sins which we have lived in, through a want of *intention* to avoid them.

For instance, the case of a *common swearer*, who dies in that guilt, seems to have no title to the divine mercy, for this reason, because he can no more plead any weakness, or infirmity in his excuse, than the man that hid his *talent* in the earth, could plead his want of strength to keep it out of the earth.

But now, if this be right reasoning in the case of a *common swearer*, that his sin is not to be reckoned a *pardonable frailty*, because he has no weakness to plead in its excuse, why then do we not carry this way of reasoning to its true extent? Why do not we as much condemn every other error of life, that has no more weakness to plead in its excuse than common swearing?

For if this be so bad a thing, because it might be avoided, if we did but sincerely intend it, must not then all other erroneous ways of life be very guilty, if we live in them, not through weakness and inability, but because we never sincerely intended to avoid them?

For instance, you perhaps have made no progress in the most

important Christian virtues, you have scarce gone half way in *humility* and *charity;* now if your failure in these duties is purely owing to your want of *intention* of performing them in any true degree, have you not then as little to plead for yourself, and are you not as much without all excuse, as the *common swearer?*

Why, therefore, do you not press these things home upon your conscience? Why do you not think it as dangerous for you to live in such defects, as are in your power to amend, as it is dangerous for a common swearer to live in the breach of that duty, which it is in his power to observe? Is not negligence, and a want of a sincere intention, as blamable in one case, as in another?

You, it may be, are as far from *Christian Perfection*, as the common swearer is from keeping the *third Commandment;* are you not therefore as much condemned by the doctrines of the Gospel, as the swearer is by the third Commandment?

You perhaps will say, that all People fall short of the Perfection of the Gospel, and therefore you are content with your failings. But this is saying nothing to the purpose. For the question is not whether Gospel Perfection can be fully attained, but whether you come as near it, as a sincere intention, and careful intelligence can carry you. Whether you are not in a much lower state than you might be, if you sincerely intended, and carefully laboured to advance yourself in all Christian virtues.

If you are as forward in the Christian Life, as your best endeavours can make you, then you may justly hope, that your *imperfections* will not be laid to your charge; but if your defects in *piety*, *humility*, and *charity*, are owing to your negligence, and want of *sincere intention*, to be as eminent as you can in these virtues, then you leave yourself as much without excuse, as he that lives in the sin of swearing, through the want of a sincere intention to depart from it.

The salvation of our souls is set forth in Scripture as a thing of difficulty, that requires *all our diligence*, that is to be *worked out with fear and trembling.*

We are told, that 'strait is the gate, and narrow is the way 'that leadeth unto Life, and few there be that find it. That 'many are called, but few are chosen.' And that many will miss of their salvation, who seem to have taken *some pains* to obtain it: As in these words, 'Strive to enter in at the strait gate, for 'many I say unto you will seek to enter in, and shall not be 'able.'

Here our blessed Lord commands us to *strive* to enter in,

because many will fail, who only *seek* to enter. By which we are plainly taught, that Religion is a state of *labour* and *striving*, and that many will fail of their salvation; not because they took no pains or care about it, but because they did not take pains and care enough; they only *sought*, but did not *strive* to enter in.

Every Christian therefore, should as well examine his life by these *Doctrines*, as by the Commandments. For these Doctrines are as plain marks of our condition, as the Commandments are plain marks of our duty.

For if salvation is only given to those who *strive* for it, then it is as reasonable for me to consider, whether my course of life be a course of striving to obtain it, as to consider whether I am keeping any of the Commandments.

If my Religion is only a formal compliance with those modes of worship, that are in fashion where I live; if it costs me no pains or trouble; if it lays me under no rules and restraints; if I have no careful thoughts and sober reflections about it, is it not great weakness to think that I am *striving to enter in at the strait gate?*

If I am seeking everything that can delight my senses, and regale my appetites; spending my time and fortune in pleasures, in diversions, and worldly enjoyments, a stranger to watchings, fastings, prayers, and mortifications, how can it be said that I am *working out my salvation with fear and trembling?*

If there is nothing in my life and conversation, that shows me to be different from *Jews* and *Heathens;* if I use the world, and worldly enjoyments, as the *generality* of people now do, and in all ages have done, why should I think that I am amongst *those few*, who are walking in the *narrow way* to heaven?

And yet if the way is *narrow*, if none can walk in it but those that *strive*, is it not as necessary for me to consider, whether the *way* I am in be narrow *enough*, or the labour I take be a *sufficient* striving, as to consider whether I sufficiently observe the second or third Commandment.

The sum of this matter is this: From the above-mentioned, and many other passages of Scripture, it seems plain, that our salvation depends upon the *sincerity* and *perfection* of our endeavours to obtain it.

Weak and imperfect men shall, notwithstanding their frailties and defects, be received, as having pleased God, if they have done their *utmost* to please him.

The rewards of charity, piety, and humility, will be given to those, whose lives have been a *careful labour* to exercise these virtues in as *high* a degree as they could.

We cannot offer to God the service of *Angels;* we cannot obey him as man in a state of perfection could; but *fallen men* can do their *best*, and this is the perfection that is required of us; it is only the perfection of our *best* endeavours, a careful labour to be as perfect as we can.

But if we stop short of this, for aught we know, we stop short of the mercy of God, and leave ourselves nothing to plead from the terms of the Gospel. For God has there made no promises of mercy to the *slothful* and *negligent.* His mercy is only offered to our frail and imperfect, but best endeavours to practise all manner of righteousness.

As the law to angels is angelical righteousness, as the law to perfect beings is strict perfection, so the law to our imperfect nature is, the *best* obedience that our frail nature is able to perform.

The measure of our love to God, seems in justice to be the measure of our love of every virtue. We are to love and practise it 'with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our mind, and 'with all our strength.' And when we cease to live with this regard to virtue, we live below our nature, and instead of being able to plead our *infirmities*, we stand chargeable with *negligence.*

It is for this reason that we are exhorted, to work out our salvation with *fear* and *trembling;* because unless our *heart* and *passions* are eagerly bent upon the work of our salvation; unless *holy fears* animate our endeavours, and keep our consciences strict and tender about every part of our duty, constantly examining how we live, and how fit we are to die, we shall in all probability fall into a state of negligence, and sit down in such a course of life, as will never carry us to the rewards of heaven.

And he that considers, that a just God can only make such allowances as are suitable to his justice, that our works are all to be examined by fire, will find, that *fear* and *trembling* are proper tempers for those, that are drawing near so great a trial.

And indeed there is no probability, that anyone should do all the duty that is expected from him, or make that progress in piety, which the holiness and justice of God requires of him, but he that is constantly afraid of falling short of it.

Now this is not intended, to possess people's minds with a scrupulous anxiety, and discontent in the service of God, but to fill them with a just fear of living in sloth and idleness, and in the neglect of such virtues, as they will want at the day of Judgment.

It is to excite them to an earnest examination of their lives, to such zeal, and care, and concern after Christian perfection, as they use in any matter that has gained their heart and affections.

It is only desiring them to be so apprehensive of their state, so humble in the opinion of themselves, so earnest after higher degrees of piety, and so fearful of falling short of happiness, as the great apostle St. *Paul* was, when he thus wrote to the *Philippians*.

'Not as though I had already attained, either were already 'perfect;—but this one thing I do, forgetting those things 'which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which 'are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high 'calling of God in Christ Jesus.' And then he adds, 'Let us 'therefore, as many as are perfect, be thus minded.'

But now, if the Apostle thought it necessary for those, who were in his state of perfection, to be *thus minded*, that is, thus labouring, pressing and aspiring after some degrees of holiness, to which they were not then arrived, surely it is much more necessary for us, who are born in the dregs of time, and labouring under great imperfections, *to be thus minded*, that is, thus earnest and striving after such degrees of a holy and divine life, as we have not yet attained.

The best way for anyone to know, how much he ought to aspire after holiness, is to consider, not how much will make his present life easy, but to ask himself, how much he thinks will make him easy, at the hour of death.

Now any man that dares be so serious, as to put this question to himself, will be forced to answer, that at death, everyone will wish that he had been as perfect as human nature can be.

Is not this therefore sufficient, to put us not only upon wishing, but labouring after all that perfection, which we shall then lament the want of? Is it not excessive folly, to be content with such a course of piety, as we already know cannot content us, at a time when we shall so want it, as to have nothing else to comfort us? How can we carry a severer condemnation against ourselves, than to believe, that at the hour of death, we shall want the virtues of the *Saints*, and wish that we had been amongst the first servants of God, and yet take no methods of arriving at their height of piety, whilst we are alive?

Though this is an *absurdity* that we can easily pass over at present, whilst the health of our bodies, the passions of our minds, the noise, and hurry, and pleasures, and business of the world, lead us on with eyes that see not, and ears that hear not, yet at death, it will set itself before us in a dreadful magnitude, it will haunt us like a dismal Ghost, and our conscience will never let us take our eyes from it.

We see in worldly matters, what a torment self-condemnation is, and how hardly a man is able to forgive himself, when he has

brought himself into any calamity, or disgrace, purely by his own folly. The affliction is made doubly tormenting, because he is forced to charge it all upon himself, as his own act and deed, against the nature and reason of things, and contrary to the advice of all his friends.

Now by this we may in some degree guess, how terrible the pain of that self-condemnation will be, when a man shall find himself in the miseries of death, under the severity of a self-condemning conscience, charging all his distress upon his own folly, and madness, against the sense and reason of his own mind, against all the doctrines and precepts of religion, and contrary to all the instructions, calls, and warnings, both of God, and man.

Penitens was a busy, notable tradesman, and very prosperous in his dealings, but died in the *thirty-fifth* year of his age.

A little before his death, when the doctors had given him over, some of his neighbours came one evening to see him, at which time, he spake thus to them.

I see, says he, my friends, the tender concern you have for me, by the grief that appears in your countenances, and I know the thoughts that you now have about me. You think how melancholy a case it is, to see so young a man, and in such flourishing business, delivered up to death. And perhaps, had I visited any of you in my condition, I should have had the same thoughts of you.

But now, my friends, my thoughts are no more like your thoughts, than my condition is like yours.

It is no trouble to me now to think, that I am to die young, or before I have raised an estate.

These things are now sunk into such mere *nothings*, that I have no name little enough to call them by. For if in a few days, or hours, I am to leave this carcase to be buried in the earth, and to find myself either for ever happy in the favour of God, or eternally separated from all light and peace, can any words sufficiently express the littleness of everything else?

Is there any dream like the dream of life, which amuses us with the neglect and disregard of these things? Is there any folly like the folly of our manly state, which is too *wise* and *busy*, to be at leisure for these reflections?

When we consider death as a misery, we only think of it as a miserable separation from the enjoyments of this life. We seldom mourn over an old man that dies rich, but we lament the young, that are taken away in the progress of their fortune. You yourselves look upon me with pity, not that I am going unprepared to meet the Judge of quick and dead, but that I am to leave a prosperous trade in the flower of my life.

This is the wisdom of our manly thoughts. And yet what folly of the silliest children is so great as this?

For what is there miserable, or dreadful in death, but the consequences of it? When a man is dead, what does anything signify to him, but the state he is then in?

Our poor friend *Lepidus* died, you know, as he was dressing himself for a *feast;* do you think it is now part of his trouble, that he did not live till that entertainment was over? *Feast*, and *business*, and *pleasures*, and *enjoyments*, seem great things to us, whilst we think of nothing else, but as soon as we add death to them, they all sink into an equal littleness; and the soul that is separated from the body, no more laments the loss of *business*, than the losing of a *feast*.

If I am now going into the joys of God, could there be any reason to grieve, that this happened to me before I was forty years of age? Could it be a sad thing to go to heaven, before I had made a few more *bargains*, or stood a little longer behind a *counter?*

And if I am to go amongst lost spirits, could there be any reason to be content, that this did not happen to me till I was old, and full of riches?

If good Angels were ready to receive my soul, could it be any grief to me, that I was dying upon a *poor bed* in a *garret?*

And if God has delivered me up to evil spirits, to be dragged by them to places of torments, could it be any comfort to me, that they found me upon a bed of state?

When you are as near death as I am, you will know, that all the different states of life, whether of youth or age, riches or poverty, greatness or meanness, signify no more to you, than whether you die in a *poor*, or *stately* apartment.

The greatness of those things which follow death, makes all that goes before it sink into nothing.

Now that *judgment* is the next thing that I look for, and everlasting happiness, or misery is come so near me, all the enjoyments and prosperities of life seem as vain and insignificant, and to have no more to do with my happiness, than the clothes that I wore before I could speak.

But, my friends, how am I surprised, that I have not always had these thoughts? for what is there in the terrors of death, in the vanities of life, or the necessities of piety, but what I might have as easily and fully seen in any part of my life?

What a strange thing is it, that a little *health*, or the poor business of a *shop*, should keep us so senseless of these great things, that are coming so fast upon us!

Just as you came into my chamber, I was thinking with my-

self, what numbers of souls there are now in the world, in my condition at this very time, surprised with a summons to the other world; some taken from their *shops* and *farms*, others from their *sports* and *pleasures*, these at *suits of Law*, those at *Gaming-tables*, some on the *road*, others at their own *fire-sides*, and all seized at an hour when they thought nothing of it; frighted at the approach of death, confounded at the vanity of all their labours, designs, and projects, astonished at the folly of their past lives, and not knowing which way to turn their thoughts, to find any comfort. Their consciences flying in their faces, bringing all their sins to their remembrance, tormenting them with deepest convictions of their own folly, presenting them with the sight of the angry Judge, the worm that never dies, the fire that is never quenched, the gates of hell, the powers of darkness, and the bitter pains of eternal death.

O my friends! bless God that you are not of this number, that you have time and strength to employ yourselves in such works of piety, as may bring you peace at the last.

And take this along with you, that there is nothing but a life of great piety, or a death of great stupidity, that can keep off these Apprehensions.

Had I now a thousand worlds, I would give them all for one year more, that I might present unto God, one year of such devotion and good works, as I never before so much as intended.

You perhaps, when you consider that I have lived free from scandal and debauchery, and in the communion of the Church, wonder to see me so full of remorse and self-condemnation at the approach of death.

But, alas! what a poor thing is it, to have lived only free from *murder*, *theft*, and *adultery*, which is all that I can say of myself.

You know indeed, that I have never been reckoned a *sot*, but you are at the same time witnesses, and have been frequent companions of my *intemperance*, *sensuality*, and great *indulgence*. And if I am now going to a Judgment, where nothing will be rewarded but *good works*, I may well be concerned, that though I am no *sot*, yet I have no *Christian sobriety* to plead for me.

It is true, I have lived in the communion of the Church, and generally frequented its worship and service on *Sundays*, when I were neither too *idle*, or not otherwise disposed of by my *business* and *pleasures*. But then, my conformity to the public worship, has been rather a thing of course, than any real intention of doing that, which the service of the Church supposes; had it not been so, I had been oftener at Church, more devout when there, and more fearful of ever neglecting it.

But the thing that now surprises me above all wonders, is

this, that I never had so much as a *general intention* of living up to the piety of the Gospel. This never so much as entered into my head, or my heart. I never once in my life considered, whether I were living as the laws of Religion direct, or whether my way of life was such, as would procure me the mercy of God at this hour.

And can it be thought, that I have kept the Gospel terms of salvation, without ever so much as *intending* in any serious and deliberate manner, either to know them, or keep them? Can it be thought, that I have pleased God with such a life as he requires, though I have lived without ever considering, what he requires, or how much I have performed? How easy a thing would salvation be, if it could fall into my careless hands, who have never had so much serious thought about it, as about any one common bargain that I have made?

In the business of life I have used prudence and reflection. I have done everything by rules and methods. I have been glad to converse with men of experience and judgment, to find out the reasons why some fail, and others succeed in any business. I have taken no step in trade but with great care and caution, considering every advantage, or danger that attended it. I have always had my eye upon the main end of business, and have studied all the ways and means of being a gainer by all that I undertook.

But what is the reason that I have brought none of these tempers to Religion? What is the reason that I, who have so often talked of the necessity of *rules* and *methods*, and *diligence* in worldly business, have all this while never once thought of any rules, or methods, or managements, to carry me on in a life of Piety?

Do you think anything can astonish, and confound a dying man like this? What pain do you think a man must feel, when his conscience lays all this folly to his charge, when it shall show him how regular, exact, and wise he has been in small matters, which are passed away like a dream, and how stupid and senseless he has lived, without any reflection, without any rules, in things of such eternal moment, as no heart can sufficiently conceive them?

Had I only my *frailties* and *imperfections* to lament, at this time, I should lie here humbly trusting in the mercies of God. But, alas! how can I call a general disregard, and a thorough neglect of all religious improvement, a *frailty* or *imperfection*; when it was as much in my power to have been exact, and careful, and diligent in a course of piety, as in the business of my *trade*.

I could have called in as many helps, have practised as many rules, and been taught as many certain methods of holy living, as of thriving in my shop, had I but so *intended* and *desired* it.

Oh my friends! a careless life, unconcerned and unattentive to the duties of Religion, is so without all excuse, so unworthy of the mercy of God, such a shame to the sense and reason of our minds, that I can hardly conceive a greater punishment, than for a man to be thrown into the state that I am in, to reflect upon it.

Penitens was here going on, but had his mouth stopped by a *convulsion*, which never suffered him to speak any more. He lay convulsed about twelve hours, and then gave up the ghost.

Now if every *reader*, would imagine this *Penitens* to have been some particular acquaintance or relation of his, and fancy that he saw and heard all that is here described, that he stood by his bedside when his poor friend lay in such distress and agony, lamenting the folly of his past life, it would, in all probability, teach him such wisdom as never entered into his heart before. If to this, he should consider how often he himself might have been surprised in the same state of negligence, and made an example to the rest of the world, this double reflection, both upon the *distress* of his friend, and the *goodness* of that God, who had preserved him from it, would in all likelihood soften his heart into holy tempers, and make him turn the remainder of his life into a regular course of piety.

This therefore being so useful a meditation, I shall here leave the reader, as I hope, seriously engaged in it.

Chapter IV.

We can please God in no state, or employment of life, but by intending *and* devoting *it all to his honour and glory.*

HAVING in the first Chapter stated the general nature of Devotion, and shown, that it implies not any *form of Prayer*, but a certain form of life, that is offered to God not at any particular *times*, or *places*, but everywhere and in everything, I shall now descend to some particulars, and show how we are to devote our *labour* and *employment*, our *time* and *fortunes* unto God.

As a good Christian should consider every place as holy,

because God is there, so he should look upon every part of his life as a matter of holiness, because it is to be offered unto God.

The profession of a *Clergyman*, is a holy profession, because it is a ministration in *holy things*, an attendance at the *Altar*. But worldly business is to be made holy unto the Lord, by being done as a service to him, and in conformity to his divine will.

For as all men, and all things in the World, as truly belong unto God, as any *places*, *things*, or *persons* that are devoted to divine service, so all things are to be *used*, and all persons are to *act* in their several states and employments for the Glory of God.

Men of worldly business therefore, must not look upon themselves as at liberty to live to themselves, to sacrifice to their own *humours* and *tempers*, because their employment is of a worldly nature. But they must consider, that as the world and all worldly professions, as truly belong to God, as *persons* and *things* that are devoted to the *Altar*, so it is as much the duty of men in worldly business to live wholly unto God, as it is the duty of those, who are devoted to divine service.

As the whole world is God's, so the whole world is to act for God. As all men have the same *relation* to God, as all men have all their *powers* and *faculties* from God, so all men are obliged to act for God, with all their powers and faculties.

As all things are God's, so all things are to be used and regarded as the things of God. For *men* to abuse things on *earth*, and live to themselves, is the same rebellion against God, as for *Angels* to abuse things in *Heaven*; because God is just the same Lord of all on earth, as he is the Lord of all in Heaven.

Things may, and must *differ* in their *use*, but yet they are all to be used according to the will of God.

Men may, and must differ in their *employments*, but yet they must all act for the same ends, as dutiful servants of God, in the right and pious performance of their several callings.

Clergymen must live wholly unto God in one *particular* way, that is, in the exercise of *Holy offices*, in the ministration of *Prayers* and *Sacraments*, and a zealous distribution of spiritual goods.

But men of other employments, are in their *particular* ways as much obliged to act as the servants of God, and live wholly unto him in their several callings.

This is the only difference between Clergymen, and People of other callings.

When it can be shown, that men might be vain, covetous, sensual, worldly minded, or proud in the exercise of their

worldly business, then it will be allowable for *Clergymen* to indulge the same tempers in their sacred profession. For though these tempers are most odious and most criminal in *Clergymen*, who besides their baptismal vow, have a second time devoted themselves to God, to be his servants, not in the *common offices* of human life, but in the *spiritual* service of the most *holy*, *sacred* things, and who are therefore to keep themselves as separate and different from the *common life* of other men, as a *Church* or an *Altar* is to be kept separate from houses, and tables of common use ; yet as all Christians are by their baptism *devoted* to God, and made professors of holiness, so are they all in their several callings to live as holy and heavenly persons ; doing everything in their *common* life only in such a manner, as it may be received by God, as a service done to him. For things spiritual and temporal, sacred and common, must, like *men* and *angels*, like *heaven* and *earth*, all conspire in the Glory of God.

As there is but one *God* and *Father of us all*, whose Glory gives light and life to everything that lives ; whose presence fills all places, whose power supports all beings, whose providence ruleth all Events ; so everything that lives, whether in *heaven* or *earth*, whether they be *thrones* or *principalities*, *men* or *angels*, they must all with one spirit, live *wholly* to the praise and glory of this one God and Father of them all. *Angels* as *angels*, in their heavenly ministrations, but *men* as men, *women* as women, *bishops* as bishops, *priests* as priests, and *deacons* as deacons ; some with things *spiritual*, and some with things *temporal*, offering to God the daily sacrifice of a reasonable life, wise actions, purity of heart, and heavenly affections.

This is the *common business* of all persons in this world. It is not left to any *women* in the world to trifle away their time in the follies and impertinences of a *fashionable life*, nor to any *men* to resign themselves up to worldly *cares* and *concerns :* it is not left to the *rich*, to gratify their passions in the *indulgences* and *pride* of life, nor to the *poor*, to vex and torment their hearts with the *poverty* of their state ; but men and women, rich and poor, must, with *bishops* and *priests*, walk before God in the same wise and holy spirit, in the same denial of all vain tempers, and in the same discipline and care of souls ; not only because they have all the same rational nature, and are servants of the same God, but because they *all want* the same holiness, to make them fit for the same happiness, to which they are all called. It is therefore absolutely necessary for all Christians, whether *men* or *women*, to consider themselves, as persons that are *devoted* to holiness ; and so order their *common ways of life*, by

such rules of reason and piety, as may turn it into *continual service* unto almighty God.

Now to make our *labour*, or *employment* an acceptable service unto God, we must carry it on with the same *spirit* and *temper*, that is required in giving of *alms*, or any work of *piety*.* For, if 'whether we eat or drink, or whatsoever we do, we must do all 'to the glory of God'; if 'we are to use this world as if we used 'it not'; if we are to 'present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, 'acceptable to God';† if 'we are to live by faith, and not by 'sight,' and to 'have our conversation in heaven'; then it is necessary, that the *common* way of our life in every state, be made to glorify God by *such tempers*, as make our prayers and adorations acceptable to him. For if we are worldly, or earthly-minded in our *employments*, if they are carried on with *vain* desires, and *covetous* tempers, only to satisfy ourselves, we can no more be said to live to the glory of God, than *gluttons* and *drunkards* can be said, to eat and drink to the glory of God.

As the glory of God is *one* and the *same* thing, so whatever we do suitably to it, must be done with *one* and the *same* spirit. That same state and temper of mind, which makes our *alms* and *devotions* acceptable, must also make our *labour*, or *employment*, a proper offering unto God. If a man labours to be *rich*, and pursues his business, that he may raise himself to a state of *figure* and *glory* in the world, he is no longer serving God in his employment; he is acting under other *masters*, and has no more title to a reward from God, than he that gives *alms*, that he may be *seen*, or *prays*, that he may be *heard* of men. For vain and earthly desires are no more allowable in our *employments*, than in our *alms* and *devotions*. For these tempers of worldly pride, and vain glory, are not only evil, when they mix with our good works, but they have the same evil nature, and make us odious to God, when they enter into the common business of our employment. If it were allowable, to indulge *covetous* or *vain* passions in our worldly *employments*, it would then be allowable to be vain-glorious in our *devotions*. But as our *alms* and *devotions* are not an acceptable service, but when they proceed from a heart *truly devoted* to God, so our common employment cannot be reckoned a service to him, but when it is performed with the *same* temper and piety of heart.

Most of the employments of life are in their own nature lawful; and all those that are so, may be made a substantial part of our duty to God, if we engage in them only *so* far, and for such *ends*, as are suitable to *beings* that are to live *above* the

* 1 Cor. x. 31. † Rom. xii. 1.

world, all the time that they live in the world. This is the *only measure* of our application to any worldly business, let it be what it will, where it will, it must have no more of our *hands*, our *hearts*, or our *time*, than is consistent with an hearty, daily, careful preparation of ourselves for another life. For as all Christians, as such, have renounced this world, to prepare themselves by *daily* devotion, and *universal* holiness, for an eternal state of quite another nature, they must look upon worldly employments, as upon *worldly wants*, and *bodily infirmities;* things not to be desired, but only to be endured and suffered, till death and the resurrection has carried us to an eternal state of real happiness.

Now he that does not look at the things of this life in this *degree* of littleness, cannot be said, either to feel or believe the *greatest* truths of Christianity. For if he thinks anything great or important in human business, can he be said, to feel or believe those Scriptures which represent this life, and the greatest things of life, as *bubbles*, *vapours*, *dreams*, and *shadows?*

If he thinks *figure* and *show*, and worldly *glory*, to be any *proper* happiness of a Christian, how can he be said to feel or believe this doctrine, 'Blessed are ye when men shall hate you, 'and when they shall separate you from their company, and 'shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil for the Son 'of Man's sake'? For surely, if there was any real happiness in *figure* and *show*, and *worldly glory;* if these things deserved our thoughts and care, it could not be matter of the *highest joy*, when we are torn from them by *persecutions* and *sufferings?* If, therefore, a man will so live, as to show, that he feels and believes the most *fundamental* doctrines of Christianity, he must live *above* the world; this is the *temper* that must enable him to do the business of life, and yet live *wholly* unto God, and to go through some *worldly* employment with a *heavenly* mind. And it is as necessary, that people live in their employments with this *temper*, as it is necessary, that their employment itself be *lawful*.

The *husbandman* that tilleth the ground, is employed in an honest business, that is necessary in life, and very capable of being made an *acceptable service* unto God. But if he labours and toils, not to serve any reasonable ends of life, but in order to have his *plough* made of *silver*, and to have his *horses* harnessed in *gold*, the honesty of his employment is lost as to him, and his labour becomes his *folly*.

A *tradesman* may justly think, that it is agreeable to the will of God, for him to sell such things as are *innocent* and *useful* in life, such as help both himself, and others, to a reasonable sup-

port, and enable them to assist those that want to be assisted. But if instead of this, he trades only with regard to *himself*, without any other rule than that of his own *temper*, if it be his chief end in it to grow *rich*, that he may live in *figure* and *indulgence*, and be able to retire from business to *idleness* and *luxury*, his trade, as to him, loses all its *innocency*, and is so far from being an acceptable service to God, that it is only a more plausible course of *covetousness*, *self-love*, and *ambition*. For such a one turns the necessities of employment into pride and covetousness, just as the *sot* and *epicure* turn the necessities of eating and drinking, into *gluttony* and *drunkenness*. Now he that is up early and late, that sweats and labours for these ends, that he may be sometime or other rich, and live in *pleasure* and *indulgence*, lives no more to the glory of God, than he that *plays* and *games* for the same ends. For though there is a great difference between *trading* and *gaming*, yet most of that difference is lost, when men once trade with the *same desires* and *tempers*, and for the same *ends*, that others game. *Charity* and *fine dressing*, are things very different; but if men give *alms*, for the same reasons that others *dress fine*, only to be *seen* and *admired*, charity is then but like the vanity of fine *clothes*. In like manner, if the same motives make some people painful and industrious in their *trades*, which make others constant at *gaming*, such pain are but like the pains of gaming.

Calidus has traded above thirty years in the greatest city of the kingdom; he has been so many years constantly increasing his *trade*, and his *fortune*. Every hour of the day is with him an hour of business; and though he *eats* and *drinks* very heartily, yet every *meal* seems to be in a hurry, and he would say *grace* if he *had time*. *Calidus* ends every day at the *tavern*, but has not leisure to be there till near nine o'clock. He is always forced to drink a good *hearty glass*, to drive thoughts of business out of his head, and make his spirits *drowsy* enough for sleep. He does business all the time that he is rising, and has settled several matters, before he can get to his *counting-room*. His prayers are a short *ejaculation* or two, which he never misses in *stormy*, *tempestuous* weather, because he has always something or other at *Sea*. *Calidus* will tell you with great pleasure, that he has been in this *hurry* for so many years, and that it must have killed him long ago, but that it has been a *rule* with him, to get out of the town every *Saturday*, and make the *Sunday* a day of quiet, and good *refreshment* in the country.

He is now so rich, that he would leave off his business, and amuse his *old age* with building, and furnishing a fine house in the country, but that he is afraid he should grow *melancholy*, if

he were to quit his business. He will tell you with great gravity, that it is a dangerous thing for a man that has been used to get money, ever to leave it off. If thoughts of Religion happen at any time to *steal* into his head, *Calidus* contents himself with thinking, that he never was a friend to *heretics* and *infidels*, that he has always been civil to the *Minister* of his parish, and very often given something to the *charity schools*.

Now this way of life is at such a *distance* from all the doctrines and discipline of Christianity, that no one can live in it through *ignorance* or *frailty*. *Calidus* can no more imagine that 'he is 'born again of the spirit';* that he is 'in Christ a new 'creature';† that he lives 'here as a stranger and pilgrim, 'setting his affections upon things above, and laying up treasures in heaven.'‡ He can no more imagine this, than he can think that he has been all his life an *Apostle*, working *Miracles*, and preaching the *Gospel*.

It must also be owned, that the *generality* of trading people, especially in *great towns*, are too much like *Calidus*. You see them all the week buried in business, unable to think of anything else; and then spending the *Sunday* in idleness and refreshment, in wandering into the country, in such visits and jovial meetings, as make it often the worst day of the week.

Now they do not live thus, because they cannot support themselves with *less care* and application to business; but they live thus because they want to grow *rich* in their trades, and to maintain their families in some such *figure* and degree of *finery*, as a *reasonable Christian* life has no occasion for. Take away but this *temper*, and then people of *all trades*, will find themselves at leisure to live every day like Christians, to be careful of every duty of the Gospel, to live in a visible course of Religion, and be every day strict observers both of private and public Prayer.

Now the only way to do this, is for people to consider their trade as something, that they are obliged to *devote* to the glory of God, something that they are to do only in such a manner, as that they may make it a duty to him. Nothing can be right in *business*, that is not under these rules.—The Apostle commands servants, 'to be obedient to their masters, in singleness of heart, 'as unto Christ. Not with eye-service as men-pleasers, but as 'the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart. 'With good will doing service as unto the Lord, and not to 'men.'§

* John iii. 5. † 2 Cor. v. 17. ‡ Col. iii. 1.
§ Eph. vi. 5; Col. iii. 22, 23.

This passage sufficiently shows, that all Christians are to live wholly unto God in every state and condition, doing the work of their *common calling*, in such a manner, and for such ends, as to make it a part of their *devotion* or *service* to God. For certainly if *poor slaves* are not to comply with their business as *men-pleasers*, if they are to look wholly unto God in all their actions, and serve in *singleness* of *heart*, as unto the Lord, surely men of other *employments* and *conditions*, must be as much obliged to go through their business with the same *singleness of heart;* not as pleasing the vanity of their own minds, not as gratifying their own selfish, worldly passions, but as the servants of God in all that they have to do. For surely no one will say, that a slave is to devote his state of life unto God, and make the will of God, the *sole rule* and end of his service, but that a *tradesman* need not act with the same spirit of devotion in his business. For this is as absurd, as to make it necessary for one man to be more *just*, or *faithful* than another.

It is therefore absolutely certain, that no Christian is to enter *any further* into business, nor for any *other ends*, than such as he can in *singleness* of heart offer unto God, as a *reasonable* service. For the Son of God has redeemed us for this *only end*, that we should, by a life of *reason* and *piety*, live to the glory of God; this is the only *rule* and *measure*, for every order and state of life. Without this *rule*, the most *lawful* employment becomes a *sinful* state of life.

Take away this from the life of a *Clergyman*, and his holy profession serves only to expose him to a *greater damnation.* Take away this from *tradesmen*, and shops are but so many houses of greediness and filthy lucre. Take away this from *gentlemen*, and the course of their life becomes a course of sensuality, pride, and wantonness. Take away this rule from our *tables*, and all falls into gluttony and drunkenness. Take away this measure from our *dress* and *habits*, and all is turned into such *paint*, and *glitter*, and ridiculous ornaments, as are a *real* shame to the wearer. Take away this from the use of our *fortunes*, and you will find people sparing in nothing but charity. Take away this from our *diversions*, and you will find no sports too silly, nor any entertainments too vain and corrupt to be the pleasure of Christians.

If therefore we desire to live unto God, it is necessary to bring our *whole life* under this law, to make his glory the sole *rule* and *measure* of our acting in every employment of life. For there is no other *true devotion*, but this of living devoted to God in the common business of our lives.

So that men must not content themselves with the *lawfulness*

423487

of their employments, but must consider whether they *use* them, as they are to use *everything*, as *strangers* and *pilgrims*, that are baptized into the resurrection of Jesus Christ, that are to follow him in a *wise and heavenly* course of life, in the mortification of all worldly desires, and in purifying and preparing their souls for the blessed enjoyment of God.*

For to be vain, or proud, or covetous, or ambitious in the *common course* of our business, is as contrary to these holy tempers of Christianity, as cheating and dishonesty.

If a *glutton* were to say in excuse of his gluttony, that he only eats such things as it is *lawful* to eat, he would make as good an excuse for himself, as the greedy, covetous, ambitious tradesman, that should say, he only deals in lawful business. For as a Christian is not only required to be honest, but to be of a Christian *spirit*, and make his life an exercise of *humility*, *repentance*, and *heavenly* affection, so all tempers that are contrary to these are as contrary to Christianity, as *cheating* is contrary to *honesty*.

So that the matter plainly comes to this, all irregular tempers in *trade* and *business*, are but like irregular tempers in *eating* and *drinking*.

Proud views, and *vain desires*, in our worldly employments, are as truly vices and corruptions, as *hypocrisy* in prayer, or *vanity* in alms. And there can be no reason given, why vanity in our *alms*, should make us odious to God, but what will prove any other kind of pride to be *equally* odious. He that labours and toils in a *calling*, that he may make a figure in the world, and draw the eyes of People upon the splendour of his condition, is as far from the pious humility of a Christian, as he that gives *alms* that he may be seen of men. For the reason, why pride and vanity in our *prayers* and *alms*, renders them an unacceptable service to God, is not because there is anything *particular* in prayers and alms, that cannot allow of pride, but because pride is in no respect, nor in anything, *made for man;* it destroys the *piety* of our prayers and alms, because it destroys the piety of *everything* that it touches, and renders every action that it governs, incapable of being offered unto God.

So that if we could so *divide* ourselves, as to be *humble* in some respects, and proud in others, such humility would be of no service to us, because God requires us as truly to be humble in *all* our *actions* and designs, as to be true and honest in all our actions and designs.

And as a man is not honest and true, because he is so to a

* Col. iii. 1 ; 1 Pet. i. 15, 16 ; Eph. v. 26, 27.

great *many* People, or upon *several* occasions, but because truth and honesty is the *measure* of all his dealings with everybody; so the case is the same in humility, or any other temper, it must be the general ruling habit of our minds, and extend itself to all our actions and designs, before it can be imputed to us.

We indeed sometimes talk, as if a man might be humble in some things, and proud in others; humble in his *dress*, but proud of his *learning;* humble in his *person*, but proud in his *views* and *designs*. But though this may pass in common discourse, where few things are said according to *strict* truth, it cannot be allowed, when we examine into the nature of our actions.

It is very possible for a man that lives by cheating, to be very punctual in *paying* for what he buys; but then everyone is assured, that he does not do so out of any principle of *true* honesty.

In like manner, it is very possible for a man, that is proud of his *estate*, ambitious in his *views*, or vain of his *learning*, to disregard his *dress*, and *person*, in such a manner as a truly humble man would do; but to suppose that he does so out of a true principle of religious humility, is full as absurd, as to suppose that a *cheat* pays for what he buys, out of a principle of religious honesty.

As therefore all kinds of dishonesty destroy our pretences to an *honest principle* of mind, so all kinds of pride destroy our pretences to an *humble spirit*.

No one wonders that those *prayers*, and *alms*, which proceed from pride and ostentation, are odious to God; but yet it is as easy to show, that pride is as pardonable there as anywhere else.

If we could suppose, that God rejects pride in our *prayers* and *alms*, but bears with pride in our *dress*, our *persons*, or *estates*, it would be the same thing as to suppose, that God condemns falsehood in some actions, but allows it in others. For pride in one thing, differs from pride in another thing, as the robbing of one man differs from the robbing of another.

Again, if pride and ostentation is so odious, that it destroys the *merit* and *worth* of the most reasonable actions, surely it must be equally odious in those actions, which are only founded in the *weakness* and *infirmity* of our nature. As thus, *alms* are commanded by God, as excellent in themselves, as true instances of a divine temper, but *clothes* are only allowed to cover our shame; surely therefore it must at least be as odious a degree of pride, to be vain in our *clothes*, as to be vain in our *alms*.

Again, we are *commanded to pray without ceasing*, as a means of rendering our souls more exalted and divine, but we are forbidden *to lay up treasures upon earth;* and can we think that it is not as bad, to be vain of those *treasures*, which we are *for-*

bidden to lay up, as to be vain of those *prayers*, which we are *commanded* to make.

Women are required to have their *heads covered*, and to *adorn* themselves with *shamefacedness*;* if therefore they are *vain* in those things, which are expressly forbidden, if they patch and paint that part, which can only be adorned by *shamefacedness*, surely they have as much to repent of for such a pride, as they have, whose pride is the motive to their prayers and charity. This must be granted, unless we will say, that it is more *pardonable* to glory in our *shame*, than to glory in our *virtue*.

All these instances are only to show us the great necessity of such a regular and uniform piety, as extends itself to all the actions of our common life.

That we must *eat* and *drink*, and *dress* and *discourse*, according to the sobriety of the *Christian* spirit, engage in no employments but such as we can truly devote unto God, nor pursue them any further, than so far as conduces to the reasonable ends of a holy devout life.

That we must be *honest*, not only on *particular* occasions, and in *such* instances, as are *applauded* in the world, *easy* to be performed, and free from *danger*, or *loss*, but from such a *living principle* of justice, as makes us love truth and integrity in *all its instances*, follow it through all dangers, and against all opposition; as knowing that the more we pay for any truth, the better is our *bargain*, and that then our integrity becomes a *Pearl*, when we have parted with all to keep it.

That we must be *humble*, not only in such instances as are *expected* in the world, or *suitable* to our tempers, or confined to particular occasions, but in such an humility of spirit, as renders us meek and lowly in the *whole course* of our lives, as shows itself in our *dress*, our *person*, our *conversation*, our *enjoyment* of the world, the *tranquillity* of our minds, *patience* under injuries, *submission* to superiors, and *condescensions* to those that are below us, and in all the outward actions of our lives.

That we must devote, not only *times* and *places* to prayer, but be everywhere in the *spirit* of devotion, with hearts always set towards heaven, looking up to God in all our actions, and doing everything as his servants, living in the world as in a holy temple of God, and always worshipping him, though not with our lips, yet with the *thankfulness* of our hearts, the *holiness* of our actions, and the *pious* and *charitable* use of all his gifts. That we must not only send up petitions and thoughts, now and then to heaven, but must go through all our worldly business with an

* 1 Cor. xi. 13; 1 Tim. ii. 9.

heavenly spirit, as members of Christ's mystical body, that with new *hearts*, and new *minds*, are to turn an earthly life, into a preparation for a life of greatness and glory in the kingdom of heaven.

Now the only way to arrive at this piety of spirit, is to bring all your actions to the *same rule* as your *devotions* and *alms*. You very well know what it is, that makes the *piety* of your alms or devotions ; now the same rules, the same regard to God, must render everything else that you do, a fit and acceptable service unto God.

Enough, I hope, has been said, to show you the necessity of thus introducing Religion into *all the actions* of your common life, and of living and acting with the same regard to God, in all that you do, as in your prayers and alms.

Eating is one of the lowest actions of our lives, it is common to us with mere *animals*, yet we see that the piety of all ages of the world, has turned this *ordinary* action of an animal life, into a *piety* to God, by making *every meal* to begin and end with devotion.

We see *yet* some *remains* of this custom in most Christian families ; some such *little formality*, as shows you, that people *used* to call upon God at the beginning and end of their meals. But, indeed, it is now generally so performed, as to look more like a *mockery* upon devotion, than any *solemn* application of the mind unto God. In one house you may perhaps see the *head* of the family just pulling off his *hat ;* in another half getting up from his *seat ;* another shall, it may be, proceed so far, as to make as if he had said *something ;* but, however, these *little attempts* are the remains of some devotion that was formerly used at such times, and are proofs that religion has formerly belonged to this part of *common life*.

But to such a pass are we now come, that though the custom is yet preserved, yet we can hardly *bear* with him, that seems to perform it with any degree of *seriousness*, and look upon it as a sign of a *fanatical* temper, if a man has not done it as soon as he begins.

I would not be thought to plead for the necessity of *long prayers* at these times ; but thus much I think may be said, that if prayer is *proper* at these times, we ought to oblige ourselves to use such a *form* of words, as should show, that we *solemnly* appeal to God for *such* graces and blessings, as are then proper to the occasion. Otherwise the mock ceremony, instead of blessing our victuals, does but accustom us to trifle with devotion, and give us a habit of being unaffected with our prayers.

If every *head* of a family was, at the return of *every meal*, to

oblige himself to make a *solemn adoration* of God, in such a decent manner, as becomes a devout mind, it would be very likely to teach him, that *swearing*, *sensuality*, *gluttony*, and *loose* discourse, were very improper at those meals, which were to *begin* and *end* with devotion.

And in these days of general corruption, this part of devotion is fallen into a *mock ceremony*, it must be imputed to this cause, that *sensuality* and *intemperance* have got too great a power over us, to suffer us to add any devotion to our meals. But thus much must be said, that when we are as pious as *Jews* and *Heathens* of all ages have been, we shall think it proper to pray at the beginning and end of our meals.

I have appealed to this pious custom of all ages of the world, as a proof of the reasonableness of the doctrine of this and the foregoing chapters; that is, as a proof that religion is to be the *rule* and measure of all the actions of *ordinary* life. For surely, if we are not to *eat*, but under such rules of devotion, it must plainly appear, that whatever else we do, must in its proper way, be done with the same regard to the glory of God, and agreeably to the principles of a *devout* and *pious* mind.

Chapter V.

Persons that are free from the necessity of labour and employments, are to consider themselves as devoted to God in a higher degree.

GREAT part of the world are free from the necessities of labour and employments, and have their *time* and *fortunes* in their own disposal.

But as no one is to live in his *employment* according to his own humour, or for such ends as please his own fancy, but is to do all his business in such a manner, as to make it a service unto God; so those who have no particular employment, are so far from being left at greater liberty to live to themselves, to pursue their own humours, and spend their time and fortunes as they please, that they are under greater obligations of living wholly unto God in all their actions.

The *freedom* of their state, lays them under a greater *necessity* of always choosing, and doing the *best* things.

They are those, of whom *much will be required,* because *much is given unto them.*

A *slave* can only live unto God in one *particular* way, that is, by religious patience and submission in his state of slavery.

But all ways of holy living, all instances, and all kinds of virtue, lie open to those, who are masters of themselves, their time and their fortune.

It is as much the duty therefore, of such persons, to make a wise use of their liberty, to devote themselves to all kinds of virtue, to aspire after everything that is holy and pious, to endeavour to be eminent in all good works, and to please God in the highest and most perfect manner; it is as much their duty to be thus wise in the conduct of themselves, and thus extensive in their endeavours after holiness, as it is the duty of a *slave* to be *resigned* unto God in his state of slavery.

You are no *labourer*, or *tradesman*, you are neither *merchant*, nor *soldier;* consider yourself therefore, as placed in a state, in some degree like that of *good angels*, who are sent into the world as *ministering spirits*, for the general good of mankind, to *assist*, *protect*, and *minister* for them who shall be heirs of salvation.

For the more you are free from the *common* necessities of *men*, the more you are to imitate the *higher* perfections of *angels*.

Had you, *Serena*, been obliged by the necessities of life, to wash clothes for your maintenance, or to wait upon some *mistress*, that demanded all your *labour*, it would then be your duty to serve and glorify God, by such *humility*, *obedience*, and *faithfulness*, as might adorn that state of life.

It would then be recommended to your care, to improve that *one talent* to its greatest height. That when the time came, that mankind were to be rewarded for their labours by the great Judge of quick and dead, you might be received with a 'Well 'done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of the 'Lord.'*

But as God has given you *five talents*, as he has placed you above the necessities of life, as he has left you in the hands of yourself, in the happy liberty of choosing the most exalted ways of virtue; as he has enriched you with many gifts of fortune, and left you nothing to do, but to make the best use of variety of blessings, to make the most of a short life, to study your own perfection, the honour of God, and the good of your neighbour; so it is now your duty to imitate the greatest servants of God, to inquire how the most eminent saints have lived, to study all

* Matt. xxv.

the *arts* and *methods* of perfection, and to set no bounds to your love and gratitude to the bountiful author of so many blessings.

It is now your duty to turn your *five talents*, into five more, and to consider how your *time*, and *leisure*, and *health*, and *fortune*, may be made so many happy means of purifying your own soul, improving your fellow-creatures in the ways of virtue, and of carrying you at last to the greatest heights of eternal glory.

As you have no *mistress* to serve, so let your own soul be the object of your daily care and attendance. Be sorry for its impurities, its spots and imperfections, and study all the holy arts of restoring it to its natural and primitive purity.

Delight in its service, and beg of God to adorn it with every grace and perfection.

Nourish it with *good works*, give it peace in *solitude*, get it strength in *prayer*, make it wise with *reading*, enlighten it by *meditation*, make it tender with *love*, sweeten it with *humility*, humble it with *penance*, enliven it with *Psalms* and *Hymns*, and comfort it with frequent *reflections* upon future glory. Keep it in the *presence* of God, and teach it to imitate those *guardian angels*, which though they attend on human affairs, and the lowest of mankind, yet 'always behold the face of our Father 'which is in heaven.'*

This, *Serena*, is your profession. For as sure as God is one God, so sure it is, that he has but one command to all mankind, whether they be bond or free, rich or poor; and that is, to act up to the *excellency* of that nature which he has given them, to live by *reason*, to walk in the *light* of religion, to use everything as wisdom directs, to glorify God in all his gifts, and dedicate every condition of life to his service.

This is the *one common* command of God to all mankind. If you have an employment, you are to be thus reasonable, and pious, and holy, in the exercise of it; if you have time and a fortune in your own power, you are obliged to be thus reasonable, and holy, and pious, in the use of all your time, and all your fortune.

The right religious use of everything and every talent, is the indispensable duty of every being, that is capable of knowing right and wrong.

For the reason why we are to do *anything* as unto God, and with regard to our duty, and relation to him, is the same reason why we are to do *everything* as unto God, and with regard to our duty, and relation to him.

That which is a reason for our being *wise* and *holy*, in the

* Matt. xviii. 10.

discharge of all our *business*, is the same reason for our being wise and holy in the use of all our *money*.

As we have always the *same natures*, and are everywhere the servants of the same God, as every place is equally full of his presence, and everything is equally his gift, so we must always act according to the reason of our nature; we must do everything as the servants of God; we must live in every place, as in his presence; we must use everything, as that ought to be used which belongs to God.

Either this piety and wisdom, and devotion is to go through every way of life, and to extend to the use of everything, or it is to go through no part of life.

If we might forget *ourselves*, or forget God, if we might disregard our reason, and live by *humour* and *fancy*, in anything, or at any time, or in any place, it would be as lawful to do the same in everything, at every time, and every place.

If therefore some People fancy, that they must be grave and solemn at *Church*, but may be *silly* and *frantic* at home; that they must live by some rule on the *Sunday*, but may spend *other days* by chance; that they must have some times of *Prayer*, but may waste the rest of their time as they please; that they must give some money in *charity*, but may squander away the rest as they have a mind; such People have not enough considered the nature of Religion, or the true reasons of Piety. For he that upon principles of Reason can tell, why it is good to be wise and heavenly-minded at *Church*, can tell that it is always desirable to have the *same tempers* in all other places. He that truly knows why he should spend any time well, knows, that it is never allowable to throw any time away. He that rightly understands the reasonableness, and excellency of *Charity*, will know, that it can never be excusable to waste any of our money in pride and folly, or in any needless expenses.

For every argument that shows the wisdom and excellency of Charity, proves the wisdom of spending *all* our fortune well. Every argument that proves the wisdom and reasonableness of having times of Prayer, shows the wisdom and reasonableness of losing none of our time.

If anyone could show, that we need not *always* act as in the divine presence, that we need not consider and use *everything*, as the gift of God, that we need not *always* live by reason, and make Religion the rule of all our actions, the same arguments would show, that we need *never* act as in the presence of God, nor make Religion and reason the measure of *any* of our actions. If therefore we are to live unto God at any time, or in any place, we are to live unto him at all times, and in all places. If we

are to use anything as the gift of God, we are to use everything as his gift. If we are to do anything by strict rules of reason and piety, we are to do everything in the same manner. Because *reason*, and *wisdom*, and *piety*, are as much the best things at *all times*, and in *all places*, as they are the best things, at *any time*, or in *any* place.

If it is our glory and happiness to have a *rational nature*, that is endued with wisdom and reason, that is capable of imitating the Divine nature, then it must be our glory and happiness, to improve our reason and wisdom, to act up to the excellency of our rational nature, and to imitate God in all our actions, to the utmost of our power. They therefore who confine Religion to *times* and *places*, and some little rules of *retirement*, who think that it is being too strict and rigid to introduce religion into *common life*, and make it give laws to all their actions and ways of living, they who think thus, not only mistake, but they mistake the *whole nature* of Religion. For surely they mistake the *whole nature* of Religion, who can think any part of their life is made more easy, for being free from it. They may well be said to mistake the *whole nature* of wisdom, who do not think it desirable, to be *always* wise. He has not learnt the *nature* of piety, who thinks it too much to be pious in all his actions. He does not sufficiently understand what *reason* is, who does not earnestly desire to live in everything according to it.

If we had a Religion that consisted in absurd superstitions, that had no regard to the perfection of our nature, People might well be glad to have some part of their life excused from it. But as the Religion of the Gospel is only the refinement, and exaltation of our best faculties, as it only requires a life of the highest Reason, as it only requires us to use this world, as in reason it ought to be used, to live in such *tempers* as are the glory of intelligent beings, to walk in such *wisdom* as exalts our nature, and to practise such piety, as will raise us to God ; who can think it grievous, to live *always* in the spirit of such a Religion, to have *every part* of his life full of it, but he that would think it much more grievous, to be as the Angels of God in heaven ?

Further, as God is one and the same being, always acting like himself, and suitably to his own nature, so it is the duty of every being that he has created, to live according to the nature that he has given it, and *always* to act like itself.

It is therefore an immutable law of God, that all rational beings should act *reasonably* in *all* their actions ; not at this *time*, or in that *place*, or upon this *occasion*, or in the use of some particular thing, but at *all* times, in *all* places, at *all* occasions,

and in the use of *all* things. This is a law, that is as unchangeable as God, and can no more cease to be, than God can cease to be a God of wisdom and order.

When therefore any being that is endued with reason, does an *unreasonable* thing at any time, or in any place, or in the use of anything, it sins against the *great law* of its nature, abuses itself, and sins against God, the author of that nature.

They therefore who plead for *indulgences* and *vanities*, for any *foolish* fashions, *customs*, and *humours* of the world, for the misuse of our *time*, or *money*, plead for a rebellion against our nature, for a rebellion against God, who has given us reason for no other end, than to make it the *rule* and *measure* of all our ways of life.

When therefore you are guilty of any *folly*, or *extravagance*, or indulge any *vain* temper, do not consider it as a small matter, because it may seem so, if compared to some other sins ; but consider it, as it is acting *contrary* to your *nature*, and then you will see that there is nothing *small*, that is *unreasonable*. Because all unreasonable ways are contrary to the nature of all rational beings, whether *men*, or *Angels*. Neither of which can be any longer agreeable to God, than so far as they act according to the reason and excellence of their nature.

The infirmities of human life make such *food* and *raiment* necessary for us, as *Angels* do not want ; but then it is no more allowable for us to turn these necessities into *follies*, and indulge ourselves in the luxury of *food*, or the vanities of *dress*, than it is allowable for *Angels* to act below the dignity of their proper state. For a reasonable life, and a wise use of our proper condition, is as much the duty of all *men*, as it is the duty of all *Angels* and *intelligent* beings. These are not *speculative* flights, or *imaginary* notions, but are *plain* and *undeniable laws*, that are founded in the *nature* of rational beings, who as such are obliged to live by reason, and glorify God by a continual right use of their several talents and faculties. So that though men are not *Angels*, yet they may know for what ends, and by what rules, men are to live and act, by considering the state and perfection of Angels. Our blessed Saviour has plainly turned our thoughts this way, by making this petition a constant part of all our Prayers. 'Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.' A plain proof, that the obedience of *men*, is to imitate the obedience of *Angels*, and that rational beings on earth, are to live unto God, as rational beings in Heaven live unto him.

When therefore you would represent to your mind, how Christians ought to live unto God, and in what degrees of wisdom and holiness, they ought to use the things of this life,

you must not look at the world, but you must look up to God, and the society of Angels, and think what wisdom and holiness is fit to prepare you for such a state of glory. You must look to all the *highest precepts* of the Gospel, you must examine yourself by the *spirit* of Christ, you must think how the *wisest* men in the world have lived, you must think how *departed souls* would live, if they were again to act the short part of human life; you must think what degrees of wisdom, and holiness, you will wish for, when you are leaving the World.

Now all this is not over-straining the matter, or proposing to ourselves, any needless perfection. It is but barely complying with the Apostle's advice, where he says, 'Finally, brethren, 'whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are just, what-'soever things are pure, whatsoever things are of good report; 'if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these 'things.'* For no one can come near the doctrine of this passage, but he that proposes to himself to do everything in this life as the servant of God, to live by reason, in everything that he does, and to make the wisdom and holiness of the Gospel, the rule and measure of his desiring, and using, every gift of God.

Chapter VI.

Containing the great obligations, and the advantages of making a wise and religious use of our estates *and* fortunes.

AS the holiness of Christianity consecrates all *states* and *employments* of life unto God, as it requires us to aspire after an universal obedience, doing and using everything as the servants of God, so are we more especially obliged to observe this religious exactness, in the use of our *estates* and *fortunes*.

The reason of this would appear very plain, if we were only to consider, that our *estates* are as much the gift of God, as our *eyes*, or our *hands*, and are no more to be buried, or thrown away at pleasure, than we are to put out our eyes, or throw away our limbs, as we please.

But besides this consideration, there are several other great

* Phil. iv. 8.

and important reasons, why we should be religiously exact in the use of our estates.

First, Because the manner of using our money, or spending our estate, enters so far into the business of every day, and makes so great a part of our common life, that our *common life* must be much of the same nature, as our *common way* of spending our estate. If reason and religion govern us in this, then reason and religion hath got great hold of us ; but if *humour*, *pride*, and *fancy*, are the measures of our spending our estate, then humour, pride, and fancy, will have the direction of the greatest part of our life.

Secondly, Another great reason for devoting all our estate to right uses, is this, because it is capable of being used to the most *excellent* purposes, and is so *great* a means of doing good. If we waste it, we do not waste a *trifle*, that signifies little, but we waste that which might be made as eyes to the *blind*, as a husband to the *widow*, as a father to the *orphan :* We waste that, which not only enables us to minister worldly comforts to those that are in distress, but that which might purchase for ourselves everlasting treasures in heaven. So that if we part with our money in foolish ways, we part with a great power of comforting our fellow-creatures, and of making ourselves for ever blessed.

If there be nothing so glorious as doing good, if there is nothing that makes us so like to God, then nothing can be so glorious in the use of our money, as to use it all in works of love and goodness, making ourselves *friends*, and *fathers*, and *benefactors*, to all our fellow-creatures, imitating the divine love, and turning all our power into acts of generosity, care, and kindness, to such as are in need of it.

If a man had *eyes*, and *hands*, and *feet*, that he could give to those that wanted them ; if he should either lock them up in a *chest*, or please himself with some *needless*, or *ridiculous* use of them, instead of giving them to his brethren that were *blind* and *lame*, should we not justly reckon him an inhuman wretch ? If he should rather choose to amuse himself with *furnishing* his house with those things, than to entitle himself to an eternal reward, by giving them to those that wanted *eyes* and *hands*, might we not justly reckon him mad ?

Now *money* has very much the nature of *eyes* and *feet ;* if we either lock it up in *chests*, or waste it in *needless* and *ridiculous* expenses upon ourselves, whilst the poor and the distressed want it for their *necessary* uses ; if we consume it in the *ridiculous ornaments* of apparel, whilst others are starving in *nakedness*, we are not far from the cruelty of him, that chooses rather to adorn his house with the *hands* and *eyes*, than to give

them to those that want them. If we choose to indulge ourselves in such expensive enjoyments, as have no *real use* in them, such as satisfy no *real want*, rather than to entitle ourselves to an eternal reward, by disposing of our money well, we are guilty of his madness, that rather chooses to lock up *eyes* and *hands*, than to make himself for ever blessed, by giving them to those that want them.

For after we have satisfied our own *sober* and *reasonable* wants, all the rest of our money is but like *spare eyes*, or *hands;* it is something that we cannot keep to ourselves, without being *foolish* in the use of it, something that can only be used well, by giving it to those that want it.

Thirdly, If we waste our money, we are not only guilty of wasting a *talent* which God has given us, we are not only guilty of making that useless, which is so powerful a means of doing good, but we do ourselves this further harm, that we turn this useful talent into a powerful means of corrupting ourselves; because so far as it is spent *wrong*, so far it is spent in the support of some *wrong temper*, in gratifying some vain and unreasonable desires, in conforming to those fashions, and pride of the world, which, as Christians and reasonable men, we are obliged to renounce.

As *wit* and fine *parts* cannot be trifled away, and only lost, but will expose those that have them into greater follies, if they are not strictly devoted to piety: so *money*, if it is not used strictly according to reason and religion, cannot only be trifled away, but it will betray people into *greater* follies, and make them live a more silly and extravagant life, than they could have done without it. If, therefore, you do not spend your money in doing good to others, you must spend it to the hurt of yourself. You will act like a man, that should refuse to give that as a *cordial* to a sick friend, though he could not drink it himself without *inflaming* his blood. For this is the case of *superfluous* money; if you give it to those that want it, it is a *cordial;* if you spend it upon yourself in something that you do not want, it only *inflames* and disorders your mind, and makes you worse than you would be without it.

Consider again the fore-mentioned comparison; if the man that would not make a right use of spare *eyes* and *hands*, should, by continually trying to use them himself, spoil his own eyes and hands, we might justly accuse him of still greater madness.

Now this is truly the case of riches spent upon ourselves in *vain* and *needless* expenses; in trying to use them where they have no *real use*, nor we any *real want*, we only use them to our great hurt, in creating unreasonable desires, in nourishing ill

tempers, in indulging our passions, and supporting a worldly, vain turn of mind. For high *eating* and *drinking*, fine *clothes*, and fine *houses*, *state*, and *equipage*, gay *pleasures*, and *diversions*, do all of them naturally hurt, and disorder our hearts; they are the food and nourishment of all the folly and weakness of our nature, and are certain means to make us vain and worldly in our tempers. They are all of them the support of something, that ought not to be supported; they are contrary to that sobriety and piety of heart, which relishes divine things; they are like so many weights upon our minds, that make us less able, and less inclined to raise up our thoughts and affections to the things that are above.

So that money thus spent, is not merely *wasted*, or *lost*, but it is spent to bad purposes, and miserable effects, to the corruption and disorder of our hearts, and to the making us less able to live up to the sublime doctrines of the Gospel. It is but like keeping money from the poor, to buy poison for ourselves.

For so much as is spent in the vanity of *dress*, may be reckoned so much laid out to *fix* vanity in our minds. So much as is laid out for *idleness* and *indulgence*, may be reckoned so much given to *render* our hearts *dull* and *sensual*. So much as is spent in *state* and *equipage*, may be reckoned so much spent to *dazzle* your own eyes, and render you the *idol* of your own imagination. And so in everything, when you go from *reasonable* wants, you only support some unreasonable *temper*, some *turn* of mind, which every good Christian is called upon to *renounce*.

So that on all accounts, whether we consider our fortune as a *talent*, and trust from God, or the *great good* that it enables us to do, or the *great harm* that it does to ourselves, if idly spent; on all these great accounts it appears, that it is absolutely necessary, to make reason and religion the strict rule of using all our fortune.

Every exhortation in Scripture to be wise and reasonable, satisfying only such wants as God would have satisfied; every exhortation to be spiritual and heavenly, pressing after a glorious change of our nature; every exhortation to love our neighbour as ourselves, to love all mankind as God has loved them, is a command to be *strictly religious* in the use of our money. For none of these tempers can be complied with, unless we be wise and reasonable, spiritual and heavenly, exercising a brotherly love, a godlike charity in the use of all our fortune. These tempers, and this use of our worldly goods, is so much the doctrine of all the New Testament, that you cannot read a chapter, without being taught something of it. I shall only produce one remarkable passage of Scripture, which is sufficient to justify all that I have said concerning this religious use of all our fortune.

'When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the 'holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his 'glory. And before him shall be gathered all nations; and he 'shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth 'the sheep from the goats; and he shall set the sheep on his 'right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King 'say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my 'Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the founda-'tion of the world. For I was an hungred, and ye gave me 'meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, 'and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, 'and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me.— 'Then shall he say unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, 'ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his 'angels; for I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat; I was 'thirsty, and ye gave me no drink; I was a stranger, and ye 'took me not in; naked, and ye clothed me not; sick, and in 'prison, and ye visited me not. These shall go away into ever-'lasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal.'

I have quoted this passage at length, because if one looks at the way of the world, one would hardly think, that Christians had ever read this part of Scripture. For what is there in the lives of Christians, that looks as if their salvation *depended* upon these good works? And yet the necessity of them is here asserted in the highest manner, and pressed upon us by a lively description of the glory and terrors of the day of Judgment.

Some people, even of those who may be reckoned virtuous Christians, look upon this text only as a general recommendation of *occasional* works of charity; whereas it shows the necessity not only of occasional charities now and then, but the necessity of such an *entire charitable life*, as is a continual exercise of all such works of charity as we are able to perform.

You own, that you have no title to salvation, if you have neglected these good works; because such persons as have neglected them, are, at the last day, to be placed on the left hand, and banished with a *Depart, ye cursed*. There is, therefore, no salvation but in the performance of these good Works. Who is it, therefore, that may be said to have performed these good Works? Is it he that has *sometime* assisted a *prisoner*, or relieved the *poor* or *sick?* This would be as absurd, as to say, that he had performed the duties of *devotion*, who had *sometime* said his prayers. Is it, therefore, he that has *several times* done these works of charity? This can no more be said, than he can be said to be the truly *just* man, who had done acts of justice *several times*. What is the rule therefore, or measure of per-

forming these good works? How shall a man trust that he performs them as he ought?

Now the rule is very *plain* and *easy*, and such as is *common* to every other *virtue*, or good *temper*, as well as to charity.—Who is the humble, or meek, or devout, or just, or faithful man? Is it he that has *several times* done acts of humility, meekness, devotion, justice, or fidelity? No. But it is he that lives in the *habitual exercise* of these virtues. In like manner, he only can be said to have performed these works of charity, who *lives* in the *habitual exercise* of them to the utmost of his power. He only has performed the duty of divine love, who loves God *with all his heart*, and *with all his mind*, and *with all his strength*. And he only has performed the duty of these good works, who has done them with all his heart, and with all his mind, and with all his strength. For there is no other measure of our doing good, than our *power* of doing it.

The Apostle St. *Peter* puts this question to our blessed Saviour; 'Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I 'forgive him, till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not 'unto thee, until seven times; but until seventy times seven.'* Not as if after this number of offences, a man might then cease to forgive; but the expression of seventy times seven, is to show us, that we are not to bind our forgiveness by *any number* of offences, but are to continue forgiving the most repeated offences against us. Thus our Saviour saith in another place, if he trespass 'against thee seven times in a day, and 'seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou 'shalt forgive him.'† If, therefore, a man ceases to forgive his brother, because he has forgiven him *often* already; if he excuses himself from forgiving this man, because he has forgiven *several others;* such a one breaks this law of Christ, concerning the forgiving one's brother.

Now the rule of *forgiving*, is also the rule of *giving*; you are not to *give*, or do good to *seven*, but to *seventy times seven*. You are not to cease from giving, because you have given often to the same person, or to other persons; but must look upon yourself as much obliged to continue relieving those that continue in want, as you were obliged to relieve them once or twice. Had it not been in your power, you had been excused from relieving any person *once;* but if it is in your power to relieve people *often*, it is as much your duty to do it often, as it is the duty of others to do it but seldom because they are but seldom able. He that is not ready to forgive every brother, as often as

* Matt. xviii. 22. † Luke xvii. 4.

he wants to be forgiven, does not forgive like a disciple of Christ. And he that is not ready to give to every brother, that wants to have something given him, does not give like a disciple of Christ. For it is as necessary to give to seventy times seven, to live in the continual exercise of all good works to the utmost of our power, as it is necessary to forgive until seventy times seven, and live in the habitual exercise of this forgiving temper, towards all that want it.

And the reason of all this is very plain, because there is the same goodness, the same excellency, and the same *necessity* of being thus charitable at one time, as at another. It is as much the best use of our money, to be *always* doing good with it, as it is the best use of it at any *particular time;* so that that which is a reason for a charitable *action*, is as good a reason for a charitable *life*. That which is a reason for forgiving *one* offence, is the same reason for forgiving *all* offences. For such charity has nothing to recommend it to-day, but what will be the same recommendation of it to-morrow; and you cannot neglect it at one time, without being guilty of the same sin, as if you neglected it at another time.

As sure, therefore, as these works of charity are necessary to salvation, so sure is it, that we are to do them to the utmost of our power; not to-day, or to-morrow, but through the *whole course* of our life. If therefore it be our duty at any time to deny ourselves any *needless* expenses, to be *moderate* and *frugal*, that we may have to give to those that want, it is as much our duty to do so at all times, that we may be further able to do more good: For if it is at any time a sin to prefer *needless vain* expense, to works of charity, it is so at all times: because charity as much excels all needless and vain expenses at one time, as at another. So that if it is ever necessary to our salvation, to take care of these works of charity, and to see that we make ourselves in some degree capable of doing them, it is as necessary to our salvation, to take care to make ourselves as capable as we can be, of performing them in all the parts of our life.

Either therefore you must so far renounce your Christianity, as to say, that you need never perform any of these good works; or you must own, that you are to perform them all your life in as high a degree as you are able. There is no middle way to be taken, any more than there is a middle way betwixt pride and humility, or temperance and intemperance. If you do not strive to fulfil all charitable works, if you neglect any of them that are in your power, and deny assistance to those that want what you can give, let it be when it will, or where it will, you number yourself amongst those that want Christian charity.

Because it is as much your duty to do good with all that you have, and to live in the continual exercise of good works, as it is your duty to be temperate in all that you eat and drink.

Hence also appears the *necessity* of renouncing all those *foolish* and *unreasonable* expenses, which the pride and folly of mankind have made so common and fashionable in the world. For if it is necessary to do good works, as far as you are able, it must be as necessary to renounce those needless ways of spending money, which render you unable to do works of charity.

You must therefore no more conform to these ways of the world, than you must conform to the vices of the world; you must no more spend with those that idly waste their money as their own humour leads them, than you must drink with the drunken, or indulge yourself with the epicure; because a course of such expenses is no more consistent with a *life of charity*, than excess in drinking is consistent with a *life of sobriety*. When therefore any one tells you of the lawfulness of expensive apparel, or the innocency of pleasing yourself with costly satisfactions, only imagine that the same person was to tell you, that you need not do works of charity; that Christ does not require you to do good unto your poor brethren, as unto him; and then you will see the wickedness of such advice: For to tell you, that you may live in such expenses, as make it impossible for you to live in the exercise of good works, is the same thing as telling you, that you need not have any care about such good works themselves.

Chapter VII.

How the imprudent use of an estate *corrupts all the tempers of the mind, and fills the heart with poor and ridiculous passions, through the whole course of life; represented in the character of* Flavia.

IT has already been observed, that a prudent and religious care is to be used, in the manner of spending our *money* or *estate*, because the manner of spending our estates makes so great a part of our common life, and is so much the business of every day, that according as we are wise, or imprudent, in this respect, the *whole course* of our lives, will be rendered either very wise, or very full of folly.

Persons that are well *affected* to Religion, that receive instructions of piety with *pleasure* and *satisfaction*, often wonder how it comes to pass, that they make no greater *progress* in that Religion which they so much *admire*.

Now the reason of it is this ; it is because Religion lives only in their *head*, but something else has possession of their *hearts ;* and therefore they continue from *year* to *year* mere *admirers*, and *praisers* of piety, without ever coming up to the reality and perfection of its precepts.

If it be asked, why Religion does not get possession of their hearts, the reason is this. It is not because they live in *gross sins*, or *debaucheries*, for their regard to religion preserves them from such disorders.

But it is because their *hearts* are constantly *employed, perverted*, and kept in a wrong state, by the *indiscreet use* of such things as are *lawful* to be used.

The use and enjoyment of their estates is *lawful*, and therefore it never comes into their heads, to imagine any great danger from that quarter. They never reflect, that there is a *vain*, and *imprudent* use of their estates, which, though it does not destroy like *gross sins*, yet so *disorders* the heart, and supports it in such *sensuality* and *dulness*, such *pride* and *vanity*, as makes it incapable of receiving the *life* and *spirit* of piety.

For our souls may receive an infinite hurt, and be rendered incapable of all virtues, merely by the use of *innocent* and *lawful* things.

What is more innocent than *rest* and *retirement ?* And yet what more dangerous, than sloth and idleness ? What is more lawful than *eating* and *drinking ?* And yet what more destructive of all virtue, what more fruitful of all vice, than *sensuality* and *indulgence ?*

How *lawful* and *praiseworthy* is the care of a family ? And yet how certainly are many people rendered incapable of all virtue, by a worldly and solicitous temper ?

Now it is for want of religious exactness in the use of these *innocent* and *lawful things*, that Religion cannot get possession of our hearts. And it is in the *right* and *prudent* management of ourselves, as to these things, that all the *arts* of holy living chiefly consist.

Gross sins are plainly seen, and easily avoided by persons that profess Religion. But the *indiscreet* and *dangerous* use of innocent and lawful things, as it does not *shock* and *offend* our consciences, so it is difficult to make people at all sensible of the danger of it.

A *Gentleman* that expends all his estate in *sports*, and a

woman that lays out all her fortune upon herself, can hardly be persuaded that the spirit of Religion cannot subsist in such a way of life.

These persons, as has been observed, may live free from debaucheries, they may be friends of Religion, so far as to *praise* and *speak* well of it, and admire it in their imaginations; but it cannot govern their hearts, and be the spirit of their actions, till they change their way of life, and let Religion give laws to the use and spending of their estates.

For a *woman* that loves *dress*, that thinks no expense too great to bestow upon the *adorning* of her person, cannot stop there. For that temper draws a *thousand* other follies along with it, and will render the whole course of her life, her *business*, her *conversation*, her *hopes*, her *fears*, her *taste*, her *pleasures*, and *diversions*, all suitable to it.

Flavia and *Miranda* are two maiden sisters, that have each of them *two hundred pounds* a year. They buried their parents, twenty years ago, and have since that time spent their estate as they pleased.

Flavia has been the *wonder* of all her friends, for her excellent management, in making so surprising a figure in so moderate a fortune. Several *ladies* that have twice her fortune, are not able to be always so *genteel*, and so *constant* at all places of *pleasure* and *expense*. She has everything that is in the *fashion*, and is in every place where there is any *diversion*. *Flavia* is very *orthodox*, she talks warmly against *heretics* and *schismatics*, is generally at *Church*, and often at the sacrament. She once commended a *sermon* that was against the *pride* and *vanity* of dress, and thought it was very just against *Lucinda*, whom she takes to be a great deal finer than she need to be. If anyone asks *Flavia* to do something in charity, if she likes the person who makes the proposal, or happens to be in a right *temper*, she will toss him *half-a-crown* or a *crown*, and tell him, if he knew what a *long Milliner's bill* she had just received, he would think it a great deal for her to give. A *quarter* of a year after this, she hears a *sermon* upon the *necessity* of charity; she thinks the man preaches well, that it is a very *proper* subject, that people *want* much to be put in mind of it; but she applies nothing to herself, because she remembers that she gave a *crown* some time ago, when she could so ill spare it.

As for *poor* people themselves, she will admit of no complaints from them; she is very positive they are all *cheats* and *liars;* and will say anything to get relief, and therefore it must be a sin to encourage them in their evil ways.

You would think *Flavia* had the tenderest conscience in the

world ; if you were to see, how *scrupulous* and apprehensive she is of the guilt and danger of *giving* amiss.

She buys all books of *wit* and *humour*, and has made an expensive collection of all our *English Poets*. For she says, one cannot have a *true taste* of any of them, without being very conversant with them all. She will sometimes read a *book* of *Piety*, if it is a short one, if it is much commended for *style* and *language*, and she can tell where to *borrow* it.

Flavia is very *idle*, and yet very fond of *fine work ;* this makes her often *sit* working in *bed* until *noon*, and be told many a *long story* before she is up ; so that I need not tell you, that her morning devotions are not *always* rightly performed.

Flavia would be a *miracle* of Piety, if she were but half so careful of her soul, as she is of her body. The rising of a *pimple* in her face, the sting of a *gnat*, will make her keep her room two or three days, and she thinks they are very *rash* people that do not take care of things in time. This makes her so over-careful of her *health*, that she never thinks she is well enough ; and so *over-indulgent*, that she never can be really well. So that it costs her a great deal in *sleeping*-draughts and *waking*-draughts, in *spirits* for the head, in *drops* for the nerves, in *cordials* for the stomach, and in *saffron* for her *tea*.

If you visit *Flavia* on the *Sunday*, you will always meet *good company*, you will know what is doing in the world, you will hear the last *lampoon*, be told who wrote it, and who is meant by every name that is in it. You will hear what *plays* were acted that week, which is the finest song in the *opera*, who was intolerable at the last assembly, and what games are most in fashion. *Flavia* thinks they are *Atheists* that play at *cards* on the *Sunday*, but she will tell you the *nicety* of all the games, what *cards* she held, how she *played* them, and the *history* of all that happened at *play*, as soon as she comes from *Church*. If you would know who is *rude* and *ill-natured*, who is *vain* and *foppish*, who lives too *high*, and who is in *debt :* If you would know what is the quarrel at a *certain house*, or who and who are in *love :* If you would know how late *Belinda* comes home at night, what *clothes* she has bought, how she loves *compliments*, and what a long story she told at such a place : If you would know how cross *Lucius* is to his *wife*, what ill-natured things he says to her, when *nobody* hears him ; if you would know how they hate one another in their *hearts*, though they appear so kind in public ; you must visit *Flavia* on the *Sunday*. But still she has so great a regard for the holiness of the *Sunday*, that she has turned a poor old widow out of her house, as a *profane wretch*, for having been found once *mending her clothes* on the *Sunday* night.

Thus lives *Flavia;* and if she lives ten years longer, she will have spent about *fifteen hundred and sixty Sundays* after this manner. She will have worn about *two hundred* different suits of clothes. Out of this *thirty years* of her life, *fifteen* of them will have been disposed of in *bed;* and of the remaining fifteen, about *fourteen* of them will have been consumed in eating, drinking, dressing, visiting, conversation, reading and hearing Plays and Romances, at Operas, Assemblies, Balls and Diversions. For you may reckon all the time that she is *up*, thus spent, except about an *hour* and half, that is disposed of at Church, most *Sundays* in the year. With great management, and under mighty rules of economy, she will have spent *sixty hundred* pounds upon herself, bating only some *shillings*, *crowns*, or *half-crowns*, that have gone from her in *accidental* charities.

I shall not take upon me to say, that it is impossible for *Flavia* to be saved; but thus much must be said, that she has no grounds from Scripture to think she is in the way of salvation. For her whole life is in direct opposition to all those *tempers* and *practices*, which the Gospel has made necessary to salvation.

If you were to hear her say, that she had lived all her life like *Anna* the Prophetess, who *departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers, night and day*, you would look upon her as very extravagant; and yet this would be no greater an extravagance, than for her to say, that she has been *striving to enter in at the strait gate*, or making any *one doctrine* of the Gospel, a rule of her life.

She may as well say, that she lived with our Saviour when he was upon earth, as that she has lived in imitation of him, or made it any part of her care to live in such tempers, as he required of all those that would be his disciples. She may as truly say, that she has every day *washed the saints' feet*, as that she has lived in Christian *humility* and *poverty of spirit;* and as reasonably think, that she has taught a *Charity-school*, as that she has lived in *works of charity*. She has as much reason to think, that she has been a *sentinel* in an army, as that she has lived in *watching*, and *self-denial*. And it may as fairly be said, that she lived by the labour of her hands, as that she had *given all diligence to make her calling and election sure*.

And here it is to be well observed, that the *poor*, *vain* turn of mind, the *irreligion*, the *folly* and *vanity* of this whole life of *Flavia*, is all owing to the *manner* of using her estate. It is this that has formed her *spirit*, that has given life to every *idle temper*, that has supported every *trifling passion*, and kept her from all thoughts of a prudent, useful, and devout life.

When her parents died, she had no thought about her two

hundred pounds a year, but that she had so much money to do what she would with, to spend upon herself, and purchase the pleasures and gratifications of all her passions.

And it is this setting out, this false judgment and indiscreet use of her fortune, that has filled her whole life with the same indiscretion, and kept her from thinking of what is *right*, and *wise*, and *pious* in everything else.

If you have seen her delighted in *plays* and *romances*, in *scandal* and *backbiting*, easily *flattered*, and soon *affronted:* if you have seen her devoted to *pleasures* and *diversions*, a slave to every *passion* in its turn, nice in everything that concerned her *body* or *dress*, careless of everything that might benefit her *soul*, always wanting some new entertainment, and ready for every *happy* invention, in *show* or *dress*, it was because she had *purchased* all these tempers with the yearly revenue of her fortune.

She might have been *humble, serious, devout*, a lover of *good books*, an admirer of *prayer* and *retirement*, careful of her *time*, diligent in *good works*, full of *charity* and the *love* of God, but that the imprudent use of her estate forced all the contrary tempers upon her.

And it was no wonder, that she should turn her *time*, her *mind*, her *health*, her *strength*, to the same uses that she turned her fortune. It is owing to her being wrong in so great an *article* of life, that you can see nothing wise, or reasonable, or pious in any other part of it.

Now though the irregular trifling spirit of this *character* belongs, I hope, but to few people, yet many may here learn some instruction from it, and perhaps see something of their own spirit in it.

For as *Flavia* seems to be undone by the unreasonable use of her fortune, so the *lowness* of most people's virtue, the *imperfections* of their piety, and the disorders of their *passions*, is generally owing to their imprudent use and enjoyment of lawful and innocent things.

More people are kept from a true sense and taste of Religion, by a *regular kind* of sensuality and indulgence, than by *gross drunkenness*. More men live regardless of the great duties of piety, through too *great a concern* for worldly goods, than through *direct injustice*.

This man would perhaps be devout, if he were not so great a *Virtuoso*. Another is deaf to all the motives to piety, by indulging an *idle, slothful* temper.

Could you cure This man of his great *curiosity* and *inquisitive* temper, or That of his *false* satisfaction and *thirst* after *learning*, you need do no more to make them both become men of great piety.

If this *woman* would make *fewer visits*, or That not be *always talking*, they would neither of them find it half so hard to be affected with Religion.

For all these things are only *little*, when they are compared to *great sins*; and though they are little in that respect, yet they are great, as they are *impediments* and *hindrances* of a pious spirit.

For as *consideration* is the only *eye* of the soul, as the truths of Religion can be seen by nothing else, so whatever raises a *levity* of mind, a *trifling* spirit, renders the soul incapable of seeing, apprehending, and relishing the doctrines of piety.

Would we therefore make a real progress in Religion, we must not only abhor *gross* and *notorious* sins, but we must regulate the *innocent* and *lawful* parts of our behaviour, and put the most common and allowed actions of life, under the rules of discretion and piety.

Chapter VIII.

How the wise and pious use of an Estate, naturally carrieth us to great perfection in all the virtues of the Christian Life; represented in the character of Miranda.

ANY one pious regularity of any one part of our life, is of great advantage, not only on its own account, but as it uses us to live by rule, and think of the government of ourselves.

A man of business, that has brought one part of his affairs under certain rules, is in a fair way to take the same care of the rest.

So he that has brought any one part of his life under the rules of religion, may thence be taught to extend the same order and regularity into other parts of his life.

If anyone is so wise as to think his *time* too precious to be disposed of by chance, and left to be devoured by anything that happens in his way: If he lays himself under a necessity of observing how every day goes through his hands, and obliges himself to a certain order of time in his *business*, his *retirements*, and *devotions*, it is hardly to be imagined, how soon such a conduct would reform, improve, and perfect the whole course of his life.

He that once thus knows the value, and reaps the advantage of a well-ordered time, will not long be a stranger to the value of anything else that is of any real concern to him.

A rule that relates even to the smallest part of our life, is of great benefit to us, merely as it is a rule.

For as the *Proverb* saith, *He that has begun well, has half done:* So he that has begun to live by rule, has gone a great way towards the perfection of his life.

By *rule*, must here be constantly understood, a *religious rule*, observed upon a principle of duty to God.

For if a man should oblige himself to be moderate in his *meals*, only in regard to his *stomach;* or abstain from *drinking*, only to avoid the *headache;* or be moderate in his *sleep*, through fear of a *lethargy*, he might be exact in these rules, without being at all the better man for them.

But when he is moderate and regular in any of these things, out of a sense of *Christian sobriety* and *self-denial*, that he may offer unto God a more reasonable and holy life, then it is, that the *smallest rule* of this kind, is naturally the beginning of great piety.

For the smallest rule in these matters is of great benefit, as it teaches us some part of the government of ourselves, as it keeps up a *tenderness* of mind, as it presents God often to our thoughts, and brings a sense of religion into the ordinary actions of our common life.

If a man, whenever he was in company, where anyone *swore*, talked *lewdly*, or spoke *evil* of his neighbour, should make it a *rule* to himself, either gently to reprove him, or if that was not proper, then to leave the company as decently as he could; he would find, that this little rule, like a little *leaven* hid in a great quantity of *meal*, would spread and extend itself through the whole form of his life.

If another should oblige himself to abstain on the *Lord's Day* from many innocent and *lawful* things, as *travelling*, *visiting*, *common conversation*, and discoursing upon *worldly matters*, as *trade*, *news*, and the like; if he should devote the day, besides the public worship, to greater retirement, reading, devotion, instruction, and works of Charity: Though it may seem but a small thing, or a needless nicety, to require a man to abstain from such things as may be done without sin, yet whoever would try the benefit of so little a rule, would perhaps thereby find such a change made in his spirit, and such a taste of piety raised in his mind, as he was an entire stranger to before.

It would be easy to show, in many other instances, how little and small matters are the first steps, and natural beginnings of great perfection.

But the two things which of all others, most want to be under a strict rule, and which are the greatest blessings both to ourselves and others, when they are rightly used, are our *time*, and our *money*. These talents are continual means and opportunities of doing good.

He that is piously strict, and exact in the wise management of either of these, cannot be long ignorant of the right use of the other. And he that is happy in the religious care and disposal of them both, has already ascended several steps upon the *ladder* of Christian perfection.

Miranda (the Sister of *Flavia*) is a sober, reasonable Christian; as soon as she was mistress of her *time* and *fortune*, it was her first thought, how she might *best fulfil* everything that God required of her in the use of them, and how she might make the best and happiest use of this short life. She depends upon the truth of what our blessed Lord hath said, *that there is but one thing needful*, and therefore makes her whole life but one continual labour after it. She has but one reason for doing, or not doing, for liking, or not liking anything, and that is, the *will* of God. She is not so weak as to pretend to add, what is called the *fine lady*, to the true Christian; *Miranda* thinks too well, to be taken with the *sound* of such silly words; she has renounced the world to follow Christ in the exercise of humility charity, devotion, abstinence, and heavenly affections; and that is *Miranda's* fine breeding.

Whilst she was under her mother, she was forced to be *genteel*, to live in *ceremony*, to sit up late at *nights*, to be in the folly of every *fashion*, and always *visiting* on *Sundays;* to go *patched*, and loaded with a *burden of finery*, to the holy Sacrament; to be in every polite *conversation;* to hear profaneness at the *playhouse*, and wanton songs and love intrigues at the *opera;* to dance at public places, that *fops* and *rakes* might admire the fineness of her *shape*, and the *beauty* of her motions. The remembrance of this way of life, makes her exceeding careful to atone for it, by a contrary behaviour.

Miranda does not divide her duty between God, her neighbour, and herself; but she considers all as due to God, and so does everything in his name, and for his sake. This makes her consider her *fortune*, as the gift of God, that is to be used as everything is, that belongs to God, for the wise and reasonable ends of a Christian and holy life. Her *fortune* therefore is divided betwixt herself, and several other *poor People*, and she has only her part of *relief* from it. She thinks it the same folly to indulge herself in needless, vain expenses, as to give to other People to spend in the same way. Therefore she will not give

a *poor* man money to go see a *Puppet-show*, neither will she allow herself any to spend in the same manner; thinking it very proper to be as *wise* herself, as she expects poor men should be. For is it a folly and a *crime* in a *poor* man, says *Miranda*, to waste what is given him in foolish trifles, whilst he wants *meat*, *drink*, and *clothes?* And is it less folly, or a less crime in me, to spend that money in silly diversions, which might be so much better spent in *imitation* of the divine goodness, in works of kindness and charity towards my fellow-creatures, and Fellow-Christians? If a poor man's own *necessities* are a reason why he should not waste any of his money idly, surely the necessities of the *poor*, the *excellency* of Charity, which is received as done to Christ himself, is a much *greater reason* why no one should ever waste any of his money. For if he does so, he does not only do like the poor man, only waste that which he wants himself, but he wastes that which is wanted for the most noble use, and which Christ himself is ready to receive at his hands. And if we are angry at a *poor* man, and look upon him as a *wretch*, when he throws away that which should buy his own bread; how must we appear in the sight of God, if we make a *wanton idle* use of that, which should buy bread and clothes for the hungry and naked brethren, who are as near and dear to God as we are, and fellow-heirs of the same state of future Glory? This is the spirit of *Miranda*, and thus she uses the gifts of God; she is only one of a certain number of *poor People*, that are *relieved* out of her fortune, and she only differs from them in the *blessedness* of giving.

Excepting her victuals, she never spent ten pounds a year upon herself. If you were to see her, you would wonder what poor body it was, that was so surprisingly *neat* and *clean*. She has but one rule that she observes in her dress, to be always *clean*, and in the *cheapest* things. Everything about her resembles the purity of her soul, and she is always clean without, because she is always pure within.

Every morning sees her *early* at her Prayers, she rejoices in the beginning of every day, because it begins all her pious rules of holy living, and brings the fresh pleasure of repeating them. She seems to be as a *guardian Angel* to those that dwell about her, with her watchings and prayers blessing the place where she dwells, and making intercession with God for those that are asleep.

Her devotions have had some intervals, and God has heard several of her private Prayers, before the light is suffered to enter into her sister's room. *Miranda* does not know what it is to have a dull half-day; the return of her hours of Prayer, and

her religious exercises, come too often to let any considerable part of time lie heavy upon her hands.

When you see her at *work*, you see the same wisdom that governs all her other actions, she is either doing something that is necessary for herself, or necessary for others, who want to be assisted. There is scarcely a poor family in the neighbourhood, but wears something or other that has had the labour of her hands. Her wise and pious mind neither wants the amusement, nor can bear with the folly of idle and impertinent work. She can admit of no such folly as this in the day, because she is to answer for all her actions at night. When there is no wisdom to be observed in the employment of her hands, when there is no *useful* or *charitable* work to be done, *Miranda* will work no more. At her *table* she lives strictly by this rule of holy Scripture, 'Whether ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the 'glory of God.' This makes her begin and end every meal, as she begins and ends every day, with acts of devotion: She eats and drinks only for the sake of living, and with so *regular* an abstinence, that every *meal* is an exercise of *self-denial*, and she humbles her body every time that she is forced to *feed* it. If *Miranda* were to run a *race* for her life, she would submit to a *diet* that was proper for it. But as the race which is set before her, is a race of *holiness, purity*, and *heavenly* affection, which she is to finish in a corrupt, disordered body of earthly passions, so her everyday diet has only this one end, to make her body fitter for this spiritual race. She does not weigh her meat in a pair of *scales*, but she weighs it in a much better balance; so much as gives a proper strength to her body, and renders it able and willing to obey the soul, to join in Psalms and Prayers, and lift up eyes and hands towards Heaven with greater readiness, so much is *Miranda's meal*. So that *Miranda* will never have her eyes swell with fatness, or pant under a heavy load of flesh, until she has *changed* her religion.

The holy Scriptures, especially of the New Testament, are her daily study; these she reads with a watchful attention, constantly casting an eye upon herself, and trying herself, by every doctrine that is there. When she has the New Testament in her hand, she supposes herself at the feet of our Saviour and his Apostles, and makes everything that she learns of them, so many laws of her life. She receives their sacred words with as much attention, and reverence, as if she saw their persons, and knew that they were just come from Heaven, on purpose to teach her the way that leads to it.

She thinks, that the trying of herself every day by the doctrines of Scripture, is the only possible way to be ready for

her trial at the last day. She is sometimes afraid that she lays out too much money in books, because she cannot forbear buying all practical books of any note; especially such as enter into the *heart* of religion, and describe the *inward holiness* of the Christian life. But of all human writings, the lives of pious persons, and eminent saints, are her greatest delight. In these she searches as for hidden treasure, hoping to find some secret of holy living, some uncommon degree of piety, which she may make her own. By this means *Miranda* has her head and her heart, so stored with all the principles of wisdom and holiness, she is so full of the one main business of life, that she finds it difficult to converse upon any other subject; and if you are in her company, when she thinks it proper to talk, you must be made wiser and better, whether you will or no.

To relate her charity, would be to relate the history of every day for twenty years; for so long has all her fortune been spent that way. She has set up nearly twenty poor tradesmen that had failed in their business, and saved as many from failing. She has educated several poor children, that were picked up in the streets, and put them in a way of an honest employment. As soon as any labourer is confined at home with sickness, she sends him, till he recovers, *twice* the value of his wages, that he may have one part to give to his family, as usual, and the other to provide things convenient for his sickness.

If a family seems too large to be supported by the labour of those that can work in it, she pays their rent, and gives them something yearly towards their clothing. By this means, there are many poor families that live in a comfortable manner, and are from year to year blessing her in their prayers.

If there is any poor man or woman, that is more than ordinarily wicked and reprobate, *Miranda* has her eye upon them, she watches their time of need and adversity; and if she can discover that they are in any great straits, or affliction, she gives them speedy relief. She has this care for this sort of people, because she once saved a very profligate person from being carried to prison, who immediately became a true penitent.

There is nothing in the character of *Miranda* more to be admired, than this temper. For this tenderness of affection towards the most abandoned sinners, is the highest instance of a divine and God-like soul.

Miranda once passed by a house, where the *man* and his *wife* were cursing and swearing at one another, in a most dreadful manner, and three children crying about them; this sight so much affected her compassionate mind, that she went the next day, and bought the three children, that they might not be

ruined by living with such wicked parents; they now live with *Miranda*, are blessed with her care and prayers, and all the good works which she can do for them. They hear her talk, they see her live, they join with her in Psalms and Prayers. The eldest of them has already converted his parents from their wicked life, and shows a turn of mind so remarkably pious, that *Miranda* intends him for *holy orders;* that being thus saved himself, he may be zealous in the salvation of souls, and do to other miserable objects, as she has done to him.

Miranda is a constant relief to poor people in their *misfortunes* and *accidents;* there are sometimes little misfortunes that happen to them, which of themselves they could never be able to overcome. The death of a *cow*, or a *horse*, or some little *robbery*, would keep them in distress all their lives. She does not suffer them to grieve under such accidents as these. She immediately gives them the full value of their loss, and makes use of it as a means of raising their minds towards God.

She has a great tenderness for *old people* that are grown past their labour. The parish allowance to such people is very seldom a comfortable maintenance. For this reason they are the constant objects of her care; she adds so much to their allowance, as somewhat exceeds the wages they got when they were young. This she does to comfort the infirmities of their age, that being free from trouble and distress, they may serve God in peace, and tranquillity of mind. She has generally a large number of this kind, who by her charities and exhortations to holiness, spend their last days in great piety and devotion.

Miranda never wants compassion, even to common beggars; especially towards those that are *old* or *sick*, or full of *sores*, that want *eyes* or *limbs*. She hears their complaints with tenderness, gives them some proof of her kindness, and never rejects them with hard, or reproachful language, for fear of adding affliction to her fellow-creatures.

If a poor old traveller tells her, that he has neither *strength*, nor *food*, nor *money* left, she never bids him go to the place from whence he came, or tells him, that she cannot relieve him, because he may be a *cheat*, or she does not know him; but she relieves him for that reason, because he is a *stranger*, and *unknown* to her. For it is the most noble part of charity, to be kind and tender to those whom we never saw before, and perhaps never may see again in this life. *I was a stranger, and ye took me in*, saith our blessed Saviour; but who can perform this duty, that will not relieve persons that are unknown to him?

Miranda considers, that *Lazarus* was a common beggar, that he was the care of *Angels*, and carried into *Abraham's* bosom.

She considers, that our blessed Saviour and his Apostles, were kind to *beggars;* that they spoke comfortably to them, healed their diseases, and restored eyes and limbs to the lame and blind. That *Peter* said to the beggar that wanted an alms from him, 'Silver and gold have I none, but such as I have give I 'thee; in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and 'walk.' *Miranda*, therefore, never treats beggars with disregard and aversion, but she imitates the kindness of our Saviour and his Apostles towards them; and though she cannot, like them, work miracles for their relief, yet she relieves them with that power that she hath; and may say with the Apostle, 'Such as I 'have give I thee, in the name of Jesus Christ.'

It may be, says *Miranda*, that I may often give to those that do not deserve it, or that will make an *ill use* of my alms. But what then? Is not this the very method of divine goodness? Does not God make *his sun to rise on the evil, and on the good?* Is not this the very *goodness* that is recommended to us in Scripture, that by imitating of it, we may be children of our Father which is in Heaven, *who sendeth rain on the just, and on the unjust?* And shall I with-hold a little *money*, or *food*, from my fellow-creature, for fear he should not be good enough to receive it of me? Do I beg of God to deal with me, not according to my merit, but according to his own great goodness; and shall I be so absurd, as to with-hold my charity from a poor brother, because he may perhaps not deserve it? Shall I use a *measure* towards him, which I pray God never to use towards me?

Besides, where has the Scripture made *merit* the rule or measure of charity? On the contrary, the Scripture saith, 'If 'thy enemy hunger, feed him, if he thirst, give him drink.'

Now this plainly teaches us, that the *merit* of persons is to be no rule of our charity, but that we are to do acts of kindness to those that *least* of all deserve it. For if I am to *love* and do good to my worst enemies; if I am to be charitable to them, notwithstanding all their *spite* and *malice*, surely *merit* is no measure of charity. If I am not to with-hold my charity from such bad people, and who are at the same time my enemies, surely I am not to deny alms to poor beggars, whom I neither know to be bad people, nor any way my enemies.

You will perhaps say, that by this means I encourage people to be *beggars*. But the same thoughtless objection may be made against all *kinds* of charities, for they may encourage people to depend upon them. The same may be said against *forgiving* our enemies, for it may *encourage* people to do us hurt. The same may be said even against the goodness of God, that by

pouring his blessings on the evil and on the good, on the just and on the unjust, evil and unjust men are *encouraged* in their wicked ways. The same may be said against clothing the naked, or giving medicines to the sick, for that may encourage people to *neglect* themselves, and be *careless* of their health. But when the *love of God dwelleth in you*, when it has enlarged your heart, and filled you with bowels of mercy and compassion, you will make no more such objections as these.

When you are at any time turning away the *poor*, the *old*, the *sick* and *helpless* traveller, the *lame*, or the *blind*, ask yourself this question, Do I sincerely wish these poor creatures may be as happy as *Lazarus*, that was carried by *Angels* into *Abraham's* bosom? Do I sincerely desire that God would make them fellow-heirs with me in eternal Glory? Now if you search into your soul, you will find that there are none of these motions there, that you are wishing nothing of this. For it is impossible for anyone heartily to wish a poor creature so *great* a happiness, and yet not have a heart to give him a *small* alms. For this reason, says *Miranda*, as far as I can, I give to *all*, because I pray to God to forgive *all;* and I cannot refuse an *alms* to those whom I pray God to bless, whom I wish to be partakers of *eternal glory*, but am glad to show some degree of love to such, as, I hope, will be the objects of the infinite Love of God. And if, as our Saviour has assured us, *it be more blessed to give than to receive*, we ought to look upon those that ask our alms, as so many *friends* and *benefactors*, that come to do us a greater good than they can receive, that come to *exalt* our virtue, to be *witnesses* of our charity, to be *monuments* of our love, to be our *advocates* with God, to be to us in Christ's stead, to *appear* for us at the day of judgment, and to help us to a blessedness greater than our alms can bestow on them.

This is the spirit, and this is the life of the devout *Miranda;* and if she lives ten years longer, she will have spent *fifty hundred* pounds in charity, for that which she allows herself, may fairly be reckoned amongst her *alms*.

When she dies, she must shine amongst *Apostles*, and *Saints*, and *Martyrs;* she must stand amongst the *first servants* of God, and be glorious amongst those that have fought the good fight, and finished their course with joy.

Chapter IX.

Containing some reflections upon the life of Miranda, *and showing how it may, and ought to be imitated by all her sex.*

NOW this life of *Miranda*, which I heartily recommend to the imitation of her sex, however contrary it may seem to the way and fashion of the world, is yet suitable to the true spirit, and founded upon the plainest doctrines of Christianity.

To live as she does, is as truly suitable to the Gospel of Christ, as to be *baptized*, or receive the *Sacrament*.

Her spirit is that which animated the *Saints* of former ages; and it is because they lived as she does, that we now celebrate their memories, and praise God for their examples.

There is nothing that is *whimsical*, *trifling*, or *unreasonable* in her character; but everything there described, is a right and proper instance of a solid and real piety.

It is as easy to show, that it is *whimsical* to go to church, or to say one's prayers, as that it is whimsical to observe any of these rules of life. For all *Miranda's* rules of living unto God, of spending her *time* and *fortune*, of eating, working, dressing, and conversing, are as substantial parts of a reasonable and holy life, as devotion and prayer.

For there is nothing to be said for the wisdom of *sobriety*, the wisdom of *devotion*, the wisdom of *charity*, or the wisdom of *humility*, but what is as good an argument for the wise and reasonable use of *apparel*.

Neither can anything be said against the folly of *luxury*, the folly of *sensuality*, the folly of *extravagance*, the folly of *prodigality*, the folly of *ambition*, of *idleness*, or *indulgence*, but what must be said against the folly of *dress*. For religion is as deeply concerned in the one as in the other.

If you may be vain in one thing, you may be vain in everything; for one kind of vanity only differs from another, as one kind of intemperance differs from another.

If you spend your fortune in the needless vain finery of dress, you cannot condemn prodigality, or extravagance, or luxury, without condemning yourself.

If you fancy that it is your *only folly*, and that therefore there can be no great matter in it; you are like those that think they

are only guilty of the folly of covetousness, or the folly of ambition. Now though some people may live so plausible a life, as to appear chargeable with no other fault, than that of covetousness or ambition; yet the case is not as it appears, for covetousness, or ambition, cannot subsist in a heart, in other respects rightly devoted to God.

In like manner, though some people may spend most that they have in needless expensive ornaments of dress, and yet seem to be in every other respect truly pious, yet it is certainly false; for it is as impossible for a mind that is in a *true state* of religion, to be vain in the use of clothes, as to be vain in the use of *alms* or *devotions*. Now to convince you of this from your own reflections, let us suppose that some *eminent saint*, as for instance, that the holy *Virgin Mary* was sent into the world, to be again in a state of trial for a few years, and that you were going to her, to be edified by her great piety. Would you expect to find her dressed out, and adorned in fine and expensive clothes? No. You would know in your own mind, that it was as impossible, as to find her learning to *dance*. Do but add *saint*, or *holy*, to any person, either *man*, or *woman*, and your own mind tells you immediately, that such a character cannot admit of the vanity of fine apparel. A *saint* genteely dressed, is as great nonsense, as an *Apostle* in an *embroidered suit;* everyone's own natural sense convinces him, of the inconsistency of these things.

Now what is the reason, that when you think of a *saint*, or *eminent* servant of God, you cannot admit of the vanity of apparel? Is it not because it is inconsistent with such a right state of heart, such true and exalted piety? And is not this therefore, a demonstration, that where such vanity is admitted, there a right state of heart, true and exalted piety, must needs be wanted? For as certainly as the holy *Virgin Mary* could not indulge herself, or conform to the vanity of the world in *dress* and *figure;* so certain is it, that none can indulge themselves in this vanity, but those who want her piety of heart; and consequently it must be owned, that all needless and expensive finery of dress, is the effect of a disordered heart, that is not governed by the true spirit of religion.

Covetousness is not a crime, because there is any harm in *gold or silver*, but because it supposes a foolish and unreasonable state of mind, that is fallen from its true good, and sunk into such a poor and wretched satisfaction.

In like manner, the *expensive finery* of dress is not a crime, because there is anything good or evil in clothes, but because the expensive ornaments of clothing, shows a *foolish* and *un-*

reasonable state of heart, that is fallen from right notions of human nature, that abuses the end of clothing, and turns the necessities of life, into so many instances of pride and folly.

All the world agree in condemning *remarkable fops*. Now what is the reason of it? Is it because there is anything sinful in their *particular dress*, or *affected* manners? No: but it is because all people know, that it shows the state of a man's mind, and that it is impossible for so ridiculous an outside, to have anything wise, or reasonable, or good within. And indeed, to suppose a fop of *great piety*, is as much nonsense, as to suppose a coward of *great courage*. So that all the world agree in owning, that the *use* and *manner* of clothes, is a mark of the state of a man's mind, and consequently, that it is a thing highly essential to religion. But then it should be well considered, that as it is not only the *sot* that is guilty of intemperance, but everyone that trangresses the *right* and *religious* measures of eating and drinking; so it should be considered, that it is not only the *fop* that is guilty of the vanity and abuse of dress, but everyone that departs from the reasonable and religious ends of clothing.

As therefore every argument against *sottishness*, is as good an argument against *all kinds* of intemperance; so every argument against the vanity of *fops*, is as good an argument against *all vanity* and abuse of dress. For they are all of the same kind, and only differ, as one degree of intemperance may differ from another. She that only *paints* a little, may as justly accuse another, because she paints a great deal; as she that uses but a common finery of dress, accuse another that is excessive in her finery.

For as in the matter of temperance, there is *no rule*, but the sobriety, that is according to the doctrines and spirit of our religion; so in the matter of apparel, there is *no rule* to be observed, but such a right use of clothes, as is strictly according to the doctrines and spirit of our religion. To pretend to make the *way of* the world our measure in these things, is as weak and absurd, as to make the way of the world the measure of our sobriety, abstinence, or humility. It is a pretence that is exceedingly absurd in the mouths of Christians, who are to be so far from conforming to the fashions of this life, that to have *overcome the world*, is made an essential mark of Christianity.

This therefore is the way that you are to judge of the crime of vain apparel: You are to consider it as an offence against the *proper use* of clothes, as covetousness is an offence against the proper use of money; you are to consider it as an indulgence of *proud* and *unreasonable* tempers, as an offence against the

humility and *sobriety* of the Christian spirit; you are to consider it as an offence against all those doctrines, that require you to do all to the *glory* of God, that require you to make a *right use* of your talents; you are to consider it as an offence against all those texts of Scripture, that command you to *love* your neighbour as yourself, to *feed* the hungry, to *clothe* the naked, and do *all works* of charity that you are able; so that you must not deceive yourself with saying, Where can be the harm of *clothes?* for the covetous man might as well say, Where can be the harm of *gold* or *silver?* but you must consider, that it is a great deal of harm to want that *wise*, and *reasonable*, and *humble* state of heart, which is according to the spirit of religion, and which no one can have in the manner that he ought to have it, who indulges himself either in the *vanity* of dress, or the *desire* of riches.

There is therefore nothing right in the use of *clothes*, or in the use of anything else in the world, but the *plainness* and *simplicity* of the Gospel. Every other use of things (however polite and fashionable in the world) distracts and disorders the heart, and is inconsistent with that inward state of piety, that purity of heart, that wisdom of mind, and regularity of affection, which Christianity requireth.

If you would be a good Christian, there is but one way, you must *live* wholly unto God; and if you would live wholly unto God, you must live according to the wisdom that comes from God; you must act according to right judgments of the nature and value of things; you must live in the exercise of holy and heavenly affections, and use all the gifts of God to his praise and glory.

Some persons perhaps, who admire the purity and perfection of this life of *Miranda*, may say, How can it be proposed as a common example? How can we who are married, or we who are under the direction of our parents, imitate such a life?

It is answered, Just as you may imitate the life of our blessed Saviour and his apostles. The circumstances of our Saviour's life, and the state and condition of his apostles, were more different from yours, than that of *Miranda's* is; and yet their life, the purity and perfection of their behaviour, is the common example that is proposed to all Christians.

It is their *spirit* therefore, their piety, their love of God, that you are to imitate, and not the particular form of their life.

Act under God as they did, direct your common actions to that end which they did, glorify your proper state with such love of God, such charity to your neighbour, such humility and self-denial, as they did; and then, though you are only teaching

your own children, and St. *Paul* is converting whole nations, yet you are following his steps, and acting after his example.

Do not think therefore, that you cannot, or need not be like *Miranda,* because you are not in her state of life; for as the same spirit and temper would have made *Miranda* a saint, though she had been forced to labour for a maintenance, so if you will but aspire after her spirit and temper, every *form* and *condition* of life, will furnish you with sufficient means of employing it.

Miranda is what she is, because she does everything in the name, and with regard to her duty to God; and when you do the same, you will be exactly like her, though you are never so different from her in the outward state of your life.

You are married, you say, therefore you have not your *time* and *fortune* in your power as she has.

It is very true; and therefore you cannot spend *so much* time, nor *so much* money, in the manner that she does.

But now *Miranda's* perfection does not consist in this, that she spends *so much* time, or *so much* money in such a manner, but that she is careful to make the best use of all that time, and all that fortune, which God has put into her hands. Do you therefore make the best use of all that time and money which is in your disposal, and then you are like *Miranda.*

If she has *two hundred* pounds a year, and you have only *two mites,* have you not the more reason to be exceeding exact in the wisest use of them? If she has a great deal of time, and you have but a little, ought you not to be the more *watchful* and *circumspect,* lest that *little* should be lost?

You say, if you were to imitate the *cleanly plainness* and *cheapness* of her dress, you should offend your *husbands.*

First, Be very sure, that this is *true,* before you make it an *excuse.*

Secondly, If your *husbands* do really require you to *patch* your faces, to expose your breasts *naked,* and to be *fine* and *expensive* in all your *apparel,* then take these two resolutions:

First, To forbear from all this, as soon as your *husbands* will *permit* you.

Secondly, To use your utmost endeavours, to recommend yourselves to their affections by such *solid virtues,* as may correct the *vanity* of their minds, and teach them to love you for such qualities, as will make you amiable in the sight of God and his holy angels.

As to this doctrine concerning the plainness and modesty of dress, it may perhaps be thought by some, to be sufficiently confuted by asking, whether all persons are to be clothed in the *same manner?*

These questions are generally put by those, who had rather perplex the plainest truths, than be obliged to follow them.

Let it be supposed, that I had recommended an universal plainness of *diet*. Is it not a thing sufficiently reasonable to be *universally* recommended? But would it thence follow, that the *nobleman* and the *labourer* were to live upon the *same food?*

Suppose I had pressed an *universal temperance*, does not religion enough justify such a doctrine? But would it therefore follow, that all people were to drink the *same liquors*, and in the same *quantity?*

In like manner, though *plainness* and *sobriety* of dress is recommended to *all*, yet it does by no means follow, that all are to be clothed in the *same manner*.

Now what is the *particular rule* with regard to temperance? How shall particular persons that use *different liquors*, and in different *quantities*, preserve their temperance?

Is not this the rule? Are they not to *guard* against *indulgence*, to make their use of liquors a *matter of conscience*, and allow of *no refreshments*, but such as are consistent with the *strictest rules* of Christian sobriety?

Now transfer this *rule* to the matter of *apparel*, and all questions about it are answered.

Let everyone but guard against the *vanity* of dress, let them but make their *use* of clothes a *matter of conscience*, let them but desire to make the *best use* of their money, and then everyone has a rule, that is sufficient to direct them in every state of life. This rule will no more let the great be *vain* in their *dress*, than *intemperate* in their *liquors;* and yet will leave it as lawful to have *some difference* in their apparel, as to have some difference in their drink.

But now will you say, that you may use the *finest*, *richest wines*, when, and as you please; that you may be as *expensive* in them as you have a mind, because *different liquors* are allowed? If not, how can it be said, that you may use *clothes* as you please, and wear the *richest* things you can get, because the *bare difference* of clothes is lawful?

For as the lawfulness of different liquors, leaves no *room*, nor any *excuse* for the *smallest degrees* of intemperance in drinking, so the lawfulness of different apparel, leaves no room, nor any excuse for the smallest degrees of *vanity* in dress.

To ask what is *vanity* in *dress*, is no more a puzzling question, than to ask what is *intemperance* in *drinking*. And though Religion does not here state the *particular measure* for all individuals, yet it gives such *general rules*, as are a sufficient direction in every state of life.

He that lets Religion teach him, that the *end* of drinking is only so far to refresh our *spirits*, as to keep us in *good health*, and make *soul* and *body* fitter for all the offices of a *holy* and *pious* life, and that he is to desire to *glorify* God by a *right* use of this *liberty*, will always know what *intemperance* is, in his particular state.

So he that lets Religion teach him, that the *end* of clothing is only to hide our *shame* and *nakedness*, and to secure our bodies from the injuries of *weather*, and that he is to desire to *glorify* God by a *sober* and *wise* use of this *necessity*, will always know what *vanity* of dress is, in his particular state.

And he that thinks it a *needless nicety*, to talk of the *religious use* of apparel, has as much reason to think it a needless nicety, to talk of the religious use of *liquors*. For luxury and indulgence in *dress*, is as great an *abuse*, as luxury and indulgence in *eating* and drinking. And there is no avoiding either of them, but by making religion the *strict measure* of our allowance in both cases. And there is nothing in Religion to excite a man to this *pious exactness* in one case, but what is as good a motive to the same exactness in the other.

Further, as all things that are *lawful*, are not therefore *expedient*, so there are some things lawful in the use of *liquors*, and *apparel*, which by abstaining from them for *pious ends*, may be made means of great perfection.

Thus, for instance, if a man should deny himself such use of liquors as is *lawful;* if he should refrain from such *expense* in his drink as might be allowed without sin; if he should do this, not only for the sake of a more *pious self-denial*, but that he might be able to relieve and refresh the helpless, poor, and sick: if another should abstain from the use of that which is *lawful* in *dress*, if he should be more *frugal* and *mean* in his habit, than the necessities of religion *absolutely* require; if he should do this not only as a means of a *better humility*, but that he may be more able to *clothe* other People; these Persons might be said to do that, which was highly suitable to the *true spirit*, though not *absolutely* required by the *letter* of the law of Christ.

For if those *who give a cup of cold water to a disciple of Christ, shall not lose their reward*, how dear must they be to Christ, who often give themselves water, that they may be able to give *wine* to the sick and languishing members of Christ's body!

But to return. All that has been here said to *married* women, may serve for the same instruction to such as are still under the direction of their *Parents*.

Now though the obedience which is due to parents, does not oblige them to carry their virtues no higher than their parents

require them; yet their obedience requires them to submit to their direction in all things, not contrary to the laws of God.

If, therefore, your parents require you to live more in the *fashion* and *conversation* of the world, or to be more *expensive* in your dress and person, or to dispose of your time otherwise, than suits with your desires after *greater perfection*, you must submit, and bear it as your *cross*, till you are at liberty to follow the higher counsels of Christ, and have it in your power to choose the best ways, of raising your virtue to its greatest height.

Now although, whilst you are in this state, you may be obliged to forego *some means* of improving your virtue, yet there are some others to be found in it, that are not to be had in a life of more liberty.

For if in this state, where *obedience* is so great a virtue, you comply in all things lawful, out of a *pious, tender* sense of duty, then those things which you thus perform, are instead of being hindrances of your virtue, turned into means of improving it.

What you lose by being restrained from such things, as you would choose to observe, you *gain* by that excellent virtue of obedience, in humbly complying against your temper.

Now what is here granted, is only in things *lawful;* and therefore the diversion of our *English stage* is here excepted; being elsewhere proved, as I think, to be *absolutely unlawful.*

Thus much to show, how persons under the direction of others, may imitate the wise and pious life of *Miranda.*

But as for those who are altogether in their own hands, if the liberty of their state makes them covet the *best gifts*, if it carries them to choose the *most excellent* ways, if they having all in their own power, should turn the whole form of their life into a regular exercise of the highest virtues, happy are they who have so learned Christ.

All persons cannot receive this saying. They that are able to receive it, let them receive it, and bless that Spirit of God, which has put such good motions into their hearts.

God may be served, and glorified in every state of life. But as there are some states of life more desirable than others, that more purify our natures, that more improve our virtues, and dedicate us unto God in a higher manner, so those who are at liberty to choose for themselves, seem to be called by God to be more eminently devoted to his service.

Ever since the beginning of Christianity, there hath been two *orders*, or *ranks* of People amongst good Christians.

The *one* that feared and served God in the *common offices* and business of a secular worldly life.

The *other* renouncing the common business and common

enjoyments of life, as *riches*, *marriage*, *honours*, and *pleasures*, devoted themselves to *voluntary poverty*, *virginity*, *devotion*, and *retirement*, that by this means they might live wholly unto God, in the daily exercise of a divine and heavenly life.

This testimony I have from the famous ecclesiastical historian *Eusebius*, who lived at the time of the *first general council*, when the faith of our *Nicene Creed* was established, when the Church was in its greatest *glory* and *purity*, when its Bishops were so many holy *fathers*, and eminent *saints*.

'Therefore,' saith he, 'there hath been instituted in the Church 'of Christ, *two ways*, or *manners* of living. The *one* raised 'above the ordinary state of nature, and common ways of living, 'rejects *wedlock*, *possessions*, and *worldly goods*, and being wholly 'separate and removed from the ordinary conversation of 'common life, is appropriated and devoted solely to the worship 'and service of God, through an *exceeding degree of heavenly love*.

'They who are of this *order* of people, seem dead to the life 'of this world, and having their *bodies* only upon *earth*, are in 'their *minds*, and *contemplations*, dwelling in heaven. From 'whence, like so many heavenly inhabitants, they look down 'upon human life, making *intercessions* and *oblations* to Almighty 'God, for the whole race of mankind. And this not with the '*blood* of beasts, or the fat, or smoke, and burning of *bodies*, 'but with the highest exercises of true piety, with cleansed and 'purified hearts, and with an whole form of life strictly devoted 'to virtue. These are their sacrifices, which they continually 'offering unto God, implore his mercy and favour for themselves 'and their fellow-creatures.

'Christianity receives this as the perfect manner of life.

'The other is of a lower form, and suiting itself more to the 'condition of human nature, admits of *chaste wedlock*, the care of 'children and family, of trade and business, and goes through all 'the employments of life under a sense of piety, and fear of God.

'Now they who have chosen this manner of life, have their 'set times for *retirement* and *spiritual exercises*, and particular 'days are set apart, for their hearing and learning the word of 'God. And this order of people are considered, as in the *second* '*state* of piety.' *

Thus this learned historian.

If therefore persons, of either sex, moved with the life of *Miranda*, and desirous of perfection, should unite themselves into little societies, professing *voluntary poverty*, *virginity*, *retirement* and *devotion*, living upon *bare necessaries*, that *some* might

* Euseb., 'Dem. Evan.,' l. 1, c. 8.

be relieved by their *charities*, and *all* be blessed with their prayers, and benefited by their *example:* Or if for want of this, they should practise the same manner of life, in as high a degree as they could by themselves; such persons would be so far from being chargeable with any *superstition*, or *blind devotion*, that they might be justly said to restore *that piety*, which was the *boast* and *glory* of the Church, when its greatest *saints* were alive.

Now as this *learned historian* observes, that it was an *exceeding great degree of heavenly love*, that carried these persons, so much above the *common ways* of life, to such an eminent state of holiness; so it is not to be wondered at, that the Religion of Jesus Christ, should fill the hearts of many Christians with this *high degree* of love.

For a Religion that opens such a scene of Glory, that discovers things so infinitely above all the world, that so triumphs over death, that assures us of such mansions of bliss, where we shall so soon be as the *Angels* of God in Heaven; what wonder is it, if such a Religion, such truths and expectations, should in some holy souls, destroy all earthly desires, and make the ardent love of heavenly things, be the one continual passion of their hearts?

If the Religion of Christians is founded upon the infinite *humiliation*, the cruel *mockings* and *scourgings*, the prodigious *sufferings*, the *poor, persecuted* life, and painful death of a crucified Son of God; what wonder is it, if many *humble adorers* of this profound mystery, many *affectionate lovers* of a crucified Lord, should renounce their share of worldly pleasures, and give themselves up to a continual course of mortification and self-denial, that thus suffering with Christ here, they may reign with him hereafter?

If *Truth* itself hath assured us, that *there is but one thing needful*, what wonder is it, that there should be some amongst Christians so full of faith, as to believe this in the highest sense of the words, and to desire such a separation from the world, that their care and attention to the one thing needful may not be interrupted?

If our blessed Lord hath said, 'If thou wilt be perfect, go and 'sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have 'treasure in heaven: And come and follow me.' What wonder is it, that there should be amongst Christians some such zealous followers of Christ, so intent upon heavenly treasure, so desirous of perfection, that they should renounce the enjoyment of their estates, choose a voluntary poverty, and relieve all the poor that they are able?

If the *chosen vessel*, St. *Paul*, hath said, 'He that is unmarried 'careth for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may

'please the Lord: And that there is this difference also between 'a wife and a virgin; the unmarried woman careth for the 'things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and 'Spirit:' What wonder is it, if the purity and perfection of the virgin state, hath been the praise and glory of the Church in its first and purest ages? That there hath always been some so *desirous* of pleasing God, so zealous after *every degree* of purity and perfection, so glad of *every means* of improving their virtue, that they have renounced the comforts and enjoyments of wedlock, to trim their *lamps*, to purify their souls, and wait upon God in a state of perpetual virginity?

And if in these our days, we want examples of these *several degrees* of perfection, if neither *Clergy*, nor *laity*, are *enough* of this spirit; if we are so far departed from it, that a man seems, like St. *Paul* at *Athens*, a *setter forth of strange doctrines*, when he recommends *self-denial*, *renunciation* of the world, *regular devotion*, *retirement*, *virginity*, and *voluntary poverty*, it is because we are fallen into an age, where the *love not only of many*, but of most, *is waxed cold.*

I have made this little appeal to *Antiquity*, and quoted these few passages of Scripture, to support some uncommon practices in the life of *Miranda;* and to show that her highest rules of holy living, her *devotion*, *self-denial*, *renunciation* of the world, her *charity*, *virginity*, and *voluntary poverty*, are founded in the *sublimest counsels* of Christ and his Apostles, suitable to the *high expectations* of another life, proper instances of a *heavenly love*, and all followed by the *greatest saints* of the best and purest ages of the Church.

'He that hath ears to ear, let him hear.'

Chapter X.

Showing how all orders and ranks of men and women of all ages, are obliged to devote themselves unto God.

I HAVE in the foregoing Chapters, gone through the several great instances of Christian devotion, and shown that all the parts of our common life, our *employments*, our *talents*, and gifts of *fortune*, are all to be made holy and acceptable unto God, by a wise and religious use of everything, and by directing our actions and designs to such ends, as are suitable to the honour and glory of God.

I shall now show, that this regularity of devotion, this holiness of common life, this religious use of everything we have, is a devotion that is the duty of all orders of Christian people.

Fulvius has had a learned education, and taken his degrees in the *University*, he came from thence, that he might be free from any rules of life. He takes no employment upon him, nor enters into any business, because he thinks that every employment or business, calls people to the careful performance and just discharge of its several duties. When he is grave, he will tell you that he did not enter into holy orders, because he looks upon it to be a state that requires great holiness of life, and that it does not suit his temper to be so good. He will tell you, that he never intends to marry, because he cannot oblige himself to that regularity of life, and good behaviour, which he takes to be the duty of those who are at the head of a family. He refused to be *Godfather* to his nephew, because he will have no *trust* of any kind to answer for.

Fulvius thinks that he is conscientious in this conduct, and is therefore content with the most *idle*, *impertinent*, and *careless* life.

He has no Religion, no Devotion, no pretences to Piety. He lives by no rules, and thinks all is very well, because he is neither a *priest*, nor a *father*, nor a *guardian*, nor has any *employment* or *family* to look after.

But *Fulvius*, you are a rational creature, and as such, are as much obliged to live according to *reason* and *order*, as a *priest* is obliged to attend at the *altar*, or a *guardian* to be faithful to his trust; if you live contrary to *reason*, you do not commit a small crime; you do not break a small trust; but you break the *law* of your nature, you rebel against God who gave you that nature, and put yourself amongst those, whom the God of *reason* and *order* will punish as *apostates* and *deserters*.

Though you have no employment, yet as you are baptized into the profession of Christ's religion, you are as much obliged to live according to the holiness of the Christian spirit, and perform all the promises made at your baptism, as any man is obliged to be honest and faithful in his calling. If you abuse this great calling, you are not false in a small matter, but you abuse the precious blood of Christ; you crucify the Son of God afresh; you neglect the highest instances of divine goodness; you disgrace the church of God; you blemish the body of Christ; you abuse the means of Grace, and the promises of Glory; and it will be more tolerable for *Tyre* and *Sidon, at the day of judgment, than for you.*

It is therefore great folly, for anyone to think himself at liberty

to live as he pleases, because he is not in such a state of life as some others are: For if there is anything dreadful in the abuse of any *trust;* if there is anything to be feared for the neglect of any calling; there is nothing more to be feared than the wrong use of our *reason*, nor anything more to be dreaded, than the neglect of our *Christian calling;* which is not to serve the little uses of a short life, but to redeem souls unto God, to fill Heaven with saints, and finish a kingdom of eternal Glory unto God.

No man therefore, must think himself excused from the *exactness* of piety and morality, because he has chosen to be *idle* and *independent* in the world; for the *necessities* of a reasonable and holy life, are not founded in the several conditions and employments of this life, but in the immutable nature of God, and the nature of Man. A man is not to be reasonable and holy, because he is a *priest*, or a *father* of a family; but he is to be a pious priest, and a good father, because piety and goodness are the *laws* of human nature. Could any man please God, without living according to *reason* and *order*, there would be nothing displeasing to God in an *idle* priest, or a *reprobate* father. He therefore, that abuses his *reason*, is like him who abuses the *priesthood;* and he who neglects the holiness of the *Christian life*, is as the man that disregards the most *important trust.*

If a man were to choose to put out his *eyes*, rather than enjoy the light, and see the works of God, if he should voluntarily kill himself, by refusing to eat and drink, everyone would own, that such a one was a rebel against God, who justly deserved his highest indignation. You would not say, that this was only sinful in a *priest*, or a *master* of a family, but in every man as such.

Now wherein does the sinfulness of this behaviour consist? Does it not consist in this, that he abuses his *nature*, and refuses to act that part for which God had created him? But if this be true, then all persons who abuse their *reason*, that act a different part from that for which God created them, are like this man, rebels against God, and on the same account subject to his wrath.

Let us suppose that this man, instead of putting out his eyes, had only employed them in looking at *ridiculous things*, or shut them up in *sleep;* that instead of *starving* himself to death, by not eating at all, he should turn every meal into a *feast*, and eat and drink like an *Epicure;* could he be said to have lived more to the glory of God? could he any more be said to act the part for which God had created him, than if he had put out his eyes, and starved himself to death?

Now do but suppose a man acting unreasonably; do but sup-

pose him extinguishing his *reason*, instead of putting out his *eyes*, and living in a course of folly and impertinence, instead of starving himself to death; and then you have found as *great a rebel* against God.

For he who puts out his eyes, or murders himself, has only this guilt, that he abuses the powers that God has given him; that he refuses to act that part for which he was created, and puts himself into a state that is contrary to the divine will. And surely this is the guilt of everyone who lives an unreasonable, unholy, and foolish life.

As therefore, no particular state, or private life, is an excuse for the abuse of our *bodies*, or *self-murder*, so no particular state, or private life, is an excuse for the abuse of our reason, or the neglect of the holiness of the Christian religion. For surely it is as much the will of God that we should make the best use of our rational faculties, that we should conform to the purity and holiness of Christianity, as it is the will of God, that we should use our eyes, and eat and drink for the preservation of our lives.

Till therefore, a man can show, that he sincerely endeavours to live according to the will of God, to be that which God requires him to be; until he can show, that he is striving to live according to the holiness of the Christian religion; whosoever he be, or wheresoever he be, he has all that to answer for, that they have, who refuse to live, who abuse the greatest trusts, and neglect the highest calling in the world.

Everybody acknowledges, that all orders of men are to be equally and exactly *honest* and *faithful;* there is no exception to be made in these duties, for any private or particular state of life. Now if we would but attend to the reason and nature of things; if we would but consider the nature of God, and the nature of man, we should find the same necessity for every other right use of our reason, for every grace, or religious temper of the Christian life: We should find it as absurd to suppose, that one man must be exact in piety, and another need not, as to suppose that one man must be exact in *honesty*, but another need not. For Christian *humility*, *sobriety*, *devotion*, and *piety*, are as great and necessary parts of a reasonable life, as *justice* and *honesty*.

And on the other hand, *pride*, *sensuality*, and *covetousness*, are as great disorders of the soul, are as high an abuse of our reason, and as contrary to God, as *cheating* and *dishonesty*.

Theft and *dishonesty* seem indeed, to vulgar eyes, to be greater sins, because they are so hurtful to civil society, and are so severely punished by human laws.

But if we consider mankind in a higher view, as God's *order*

or *society* of rational beings, that are to glorify him by the right use of their reason, and by acting conformably to the order of their nature, we shall find, that every temper that is equally contrary to reason and order, that opposes God's ends and designs, and disorders the beauty and glory of the rational world, is equally sinful in man, and equally odious to God. This would show us, that the sin of *sensuality* is like the sin of *dishonesty*, and renders us as great objects of the divine displeasure.

Again, if we consider mankind in a further view, as a redeemed order of *fallen spirits*, that are baptized into a fellowship with the Son of God; to be temples of the Holy Ghost; to live according to his holy inspirations; to offer to God the reasonable sacrifice of an humble, pious, and thankful life; to purify themselves from the disorders of their fall; to make a right use of the means of grace, in order to be sons of eternal glory: If we look at mankind in this true light, then we shall find, that all tempers that are contrary to this holy society, that are abuses of this infinite mercy; all actions that make us unlike to Christ, that disgrace his body, that abuse the means of grace, and oppose our hopes of glory, have everything in them, that can make us for ever odious unto God. So that though *pride* and *sensuality*, and other vices of the like kind, do not hurt civil society, as *cheating* and *dishonesty* do; yet they hurt that society, and oppose those ends, which are greater and more glorious in the eyes of God, than all the societies that relate to this world.

Nothing therefore can be more false, than to imagine, that because we are private persons, that have taken upon us no charge or employment of life, that therefore we may live more at large, indulge our appetites, and be less careful of the duties of piety and holiness; for it is as good an excuse for *cheating* and *dishonesty*. Because he that abuses his *reason*, that indulges himself in *lust* and *sensuality*, and neglects to act the wise and reasonable part of a true Christian, has everything in his life to render him hateful to God, that is to be found in *cheating* and *dishonesty*.

If therefore, you rather choose to be an *idle Epicure*, than to be *unfaithful;* if you rather choose to live in *lust* and *sensuality*, than to injure your neighbour in his goods, you have made no better a provision for the favour of God, than he that rather chooses to rob a *house*, than to rob a *church*.

For the abusing of our own nature, is as great a disobedience against God, as the injuring our neighbour; and he that wants piety towards God, has done as much to damn himself, as he that wants honesty towards men. Every argument therefore,

that proves it necessary for all men, in all stations of life, to be truly honest, proves it equally necessary for all men, in all stations of life, to be truly holy and pious, and do all things in such a manner, as is suitable to the glory of God.

Again, another argument to prove, that all orders of men are obliged to be thus holy and devout in the common course of their lives, in the use of everything that they enjoy, may be taken from our obligation to *prayer*.

It is granted, that *prayer* is a duty that belongs to all states and conditions of men; now if we inquire into the reason of this, why no state of life is to be excused from prayer, we shall find it as good a reason, why every state of life is to be made a state of piety and holiness in all its parts.

For the reason why we are to pray unto God, and praise him with Hymns, and Psalms of Thanksgiving, is this, because we are to live wholly unto God, and glorify him all possible ways. It is not because the praises of *words*, or *forms* of thanksgiving, are more particularly parts of piety, or more the worship of God than other things; but it is, because they are possible ways of expressing our dependence, our obedience and devotion to God. Now if this be the reason of verbal praises and thanksgivings to God, because we are to live unto God all possible ways, then it plainly follows, that we are equally obliged to worship, and glorify God in all other actions, that can be turned into acts of piety and obedience to him. And as actions are of much more significancy than words, it must be a much more acceptable worship of God, to glorify him in all the actions of our common life, than with any little form of words at any particular times.

Thus, If God is to be worshipped with forms of thanksgivings, he that makes it a rule, to be content and thankful in every part and accident of his life, because it comes from God, praises God in a much higher manner, than he that has some set time for singing of Psalms. He that dares not say an ill-natured word, or do an unreasonable thing, because he considers God as everywhere present, performs a better devotion, than he that dares not miss the church. To live in the world as a stranger and a pilgrim, using all its enjoyments as if we used them not, making all our actions so many steps towards a better life, is offering a better sacrifice to God, than any forms of holy and heavenly prayers.

To be humble in all our actions, to avoid every appearance of pride and vanity, to be meek and lowly in our words, actions, dress, behaviour, and designs, in imitation of our blessed Saviour, is worshipping God in a higher manner, than they who have only *times* to fall low on their knees in devotions. He that contents

himself with *necessaries*, that he may give the *remainder* to those that want it; that dares not to spend any money foolishly, because he considers it as a talent from God, which must be used according to his will, praises God with something that is more glorious than songs of praise.

He that has appointed times for the use of wise and pious prayers, performs a proper instance of devotion; but he that allows himself no times, nor any places, nor any actions, but such as are strictly comformable to wisdom and holiness, worships the divine nature with the most true and substantial devotion. For who does not know, that it is better to be pure and holy, than to *talk* about purity and holiness? Nay, who does not know, that a man is to be reckoned no further pure, or holy, or just, than as he is pure, and holy, and just in the common course of his life? But if this be plain, then it is also plain, that it is better to be holy, than to have holy prayers.

Prayers therefore are so far from being a sufficient devotion, that they are the smallest parts of it. We are to praise God with words and prayers, because it is a possible way of glorifying God, who has given us such faculties, as may be so used. But then as words are but small things in themselves, as times of prayer are but little, if compared with the rest of our lives; so that devotion which consists in times and forms of prayer, is but a very small thing, if compared to that devotion which is to appear in every other part and circumstance of our lives.

Again; as it is an easy thing to worship God with forms of words, and to observe times of offering them unto him, so it is the smallest kind of piety.

And, on the other hand, as it is more difficult to worship God with our substance, to honour him with the right use of our time, to offer to him the continual sacrifice of self-denial and mortification; as it requires more piety to eat and drink only for such ends as may glorify God, to undertake no labour, nor allow of any diversion, but where we can act in the name of God; as it is most difficult to sacrifice all our corrupt tempers, correct all our passions, and make piety to God the rule and measure of all the actions of our common life: so the devotion of this kind is a much more acceptable service unto God, than those words of devotion which we offer to him either in the *Church*, or in our *closet*.

Every sober reader will easily perceive, that I do not intend to lessen the true and great value of Prayers, either public or private; but only to show him, that they are certainly but a very slender part of devotion, when compared to a devout life.

To see this in a yet clearer light, let us suppose a person to

have appointed times for praising God with Psalms and Hymns, and to be strict in the observation of them; let it be supposed also, that in his common life he is restless and uneasy, full of murmurings and complaints at everything, never pleased but by chance, as his temper happens to carry him, but murmuring and repining at the very seasons, and having something to dislike in everything that happens to him. Now can you conceive anything more absurd and unreasonable, than such a character as this? Is such a one to be reckoned *thankful* to God, because he has *forms of praise* which he offers to him? Nay, is it not certain, that such forms of praise must be so far from being an acceptable devotion to God, that they must be abhorred as an abomination? Now the absurdity which you see in this instance, is the same in any other part of our life; if our *common life* hath any contrariety to our prayers, it is the same abomination, as songs of thanksgiving in the mouths of murmurers.

Bended knees, whilst you are clothed with pride; heavenly petitions, whilst you are hoarding up treasures upon earth; holy devotions, whilst you live in the follies of the world; prayers of meekness and charity, whilst your heart is the seat of spite and resentment; hours of prayer, whilst you give up days and years to idle diversions, impertinent visits, and foolish pleasures; are as absurd, unacceptable service to God, as forms of thanksgiving from a person that lives in repinings and discontent.

So that unless the common course of our lives, be according to the common spirit of our prayers, our prayers are so far from being a real or sufficient degree of devotion, that they become an empty lip-labour, or, what is worse, a notorious hypocrisy.

Seeing therefore we are to make the *spirit* and *temper* of our prayers, the *common spirit and temper* of our lives, this may serve to convince us, that *all orders* of people are to labour and aspire after the *same utmost* perfection of the Christian life. For as all Christians are to use the same holy and heavenly devotions, as they are all with the same earnestness to pray for the Spirit of God; so is it a sufficient proof, that all orders of people are, to the utmost of their power, to make their life agreeable to that one spirit, for which they are all to pray.

As certain, therefore, as the same holiness of prayers requires the same holiness of life, so certain is it, that all Christians are called to the same holiness of life.

A *soldier*, or a *tradesman*, is not called to minister at the *altar*, or preach the Gospel; but every soldier or tradesman is as much obliged to be devout, humble, holy, and heavenly-minded in all the parts of his *common life*, as a *clergyman* is obliged to be zealous, faithful, and laborious in all parts of his profession.

And all this for this one plain reason, because all people are to pray for the same holiness, wisdom, and divine tempers, and to make themselves as fit as they can for the same heaven.

All men therefore, as men, have one and the same *important* business, to act up to the excellency of their rational nature, and to make *reason* and *order* the law of all their designs and actions. All Christians, as Christians, have one and the same calling, to live according to the excellency of the Christian spirit, and to make the sublime precepts of the Gospel, the rule and measure of all their tempers in common life. The one thing needful to one, is the one thing needful to all.

The *merchant* is no longer to hoard up treasures upon earth: the *soldier* is no longer to fight for glory; the great *scholar* is no longer to pride himself in the depths of science; but they must all with one spirit 'count all things but loss, for the excellency 'of the knowledge of Christ Jesus.'

The *fine lady* must teach her eyes to weep, and be clothed with humility. The *polite gentleman* must exchange the gay thoughts of wit and fancy, for a 'broken and a contrite heart.' The man of *quality* must so far renounce the dignity of his birth, as to think himself miserable till he is *born again*. *Servants* must consider their service as done unto God. *Masters* must consider their servants as their brethren in Christ, that are to be treated as their fellow members of the mystical body of Christ.

Young Ladies must either devote themselves to piety, prayer, self-denial, and all good works, in a *virgin-state* of life; or else marry to be holy, sober, and prudent in the care of a family, bringing up their children in piety, humility, and devotion, and abounding in all other good works, to the utmost of their state and capacity. They have no choice of anything else, but must devote themselves to God in one of these states. They may choose a married, or a single life; but it is not left to their choice, whether they will make either state, a state of holiness, humility, devotion, and all other duties of the Christian life. It is no more left in their power, because they have fortunes, or are born of rich parents, to divide themselves betwixt God and the world, or take such pleasures as their fortune will afford them, than it is allowable for them to be sometimes chaste and modest, and sometimes not.

They are not to consider, how much religion may secure them a *fair character*, or how they may add devotion to an *impertinent*, *vain*, and *giddy* life; but must look into the *spirit* and *temper* of their prayers, into the *nature* and *end* of Christianity, and then they will find, that whether married or unmarried, they have but one business upon their hands, to be wise, and pious, and holy, not

in little modes and forms of worship, but in the whole turn of their minds, in the whole form of all their behaviour, and in the daily course of their common life.

Young Gentlemen must consider, what our blessed Saviour said to the young Gentleman in the Gospel; he bid 'him sell all 'that he had and give to the poor.' Now though this text should not oblige *all* people to sell *all;* yet it certainly obliges all kinds of people to *employ all* their estates, in such wise and reasonable and charitable ways, as may sufficiently show, that all that they have is devoted to God, and that no part of it is kept from the poor, to be spent in needless, vain, and foolish expenses.

If, therefore, *young Gentlemen* propose to themselves a life of pleasure and indulgence, if they spend their estates in high living, in luxury and intemperance, in state and equipage, in pleasures and diversions, in sports and gaming, and such like wanton gratifications of their foolish passions, they have as much reason to look upon themselves to be *Angels*, as to be disciples of Christ.

Let them be assured, that it is the one only business of a *Christian Gentleman*, to distinguish himself by good works, to be eminent in the most sublime virtues of the Gospel, to bear with the ignorance and weakness of the vulgar, to be a friend and patron to all that dwell about him, to live in the utmost heights of wisdom and holiness, and show through the whole course of his life a true religious greatness of mind. They must aspire after such a gentility, as they might have learnt from seeing the blessed Jesus, and show no other spirit of a gentleman, but such as they might have got by living with the holy Apostles. They must learn to love God with all their heart, with all their soul, and with all their strength, and their neighbour as themselves; and then they have all the greatness and distinction that they can have here, and are fit for an eternal happiness in heaven hereafter.

Thus in all orders and conditions, either of men or women, this is the one common holiness, which is to be the *common life* of all Christians.

The *Merchant* is not to leave devotion to the Clergyman, nor the *Clergyman* to leave humility to the *labourer;* women of *fortune* are not to leave it to the poor of their sex, *to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, to adorn themselves in modest apparel, shamefacedness*, and *sobriety;* nor *poor women* leave it to the rich to attend at the worship and service of God. *Great men* must be eminent for true *poverty of spirit*, and people of a *low and afflicted* state must greatly rejoice in God.

The man of *strength* and *power* is to forgive and pray for his

enemies, and the *innocent sufferer* who is chained in prison, must, with *Paul* and *Silas*, at midnight sing praises to God. For God is to be glorified, holiness is to be practised, and the spirit of Religion is to be the common spirit of every Christian, in every state and condition of life.

For the Son of God did not come from above, to add an external form of worship to the several ways of life that are in the world ; and so to leave people to live as they did before, in such tempers and enjoyments as the fashion and spirit of the world approves. But as he came down from heaven, altogether divine and heavenly in his own nature, so it was to call mankind to a divine and heavenly life ; to the highest change of their whole nature and temper ; to be born again of the Holy Spirit ; to walk in the wisdom and light and love of God ; and be like him to the utmost of their power ; to renounce all the most plausible ways of the world, whether of greatness, business, or pleasure ; to a mortification of all their most agreeable passions ; and to live in such wisdom, and purity, and holiness, as might fit them to be glorious in the enjoyment of God to all eternity.

Whatever therefore is *foolish*, *ridiculous*, *vain*, or *earthly*, or *sensual* in the life of a Christian, is something that ought not to be there ; it is a *spot* and a *defilement* that must be *washed* away with tears of repentance. But if anything of this kind runs through the *course* of our whole life, if we allow ourselves in things that are either vain, foolish, or sensual, we renounce our profession.

For as sure as Jesus Christ was wisdom and holiness, as sure as he came to make us like himself, and to be baptized into his spirit, so sure it is, that none can be said to keep to their Christian profession, but they who to the utmost of their power, live a wise and holy and heavenly life. This and this alone is Christianity, an universal holiness in every part of life, a heavenly wisdom in all our actions, not conforming to the spirit and temper of the world, but turning all worldly enjoyments into means of piety and devotion to God.

But now, if this devout state of heart, if these habits of inward holiness be true Religion, then true Religion is equally the duty and happiness of all orders of men ; for there is nothing to recommend it to one, that is not the same recommendation of it to all states of people.

If it be the happiness and glory of a *Bishop* to live in this devout spirit, full of these holy tempers, doing everything as unto God, it is as much the glory and happiness of all men and women, whether young or old, to live in the same spirit. And whoever can find any reasons, why an *ancient Bishop* should be

intent upon divine things, turning all his life into the highest exercises of piety, wisdom, and devotion, will find them so many reasons, why he should to the utmost of his power, do the same himself.

If you say that a *Bishop* must be an eminent example of Christian holiness, because of his high and sacred calling, you say right. But if you say, that it is more to his advantage to be exemplary, than it is yours, you greatly mistake. For there is nothing to make the highest degrees of holiness desirable to a Bishop, but what makes them equally desirable to every *young person* of every family.

For an exalted piety, high devotion, and the religious use of everything, is as much the glory and happiness of one state of life, as it is of another.

Do but fancy in your mind, what a spirit of piety you would have in the *best Bishop* in the world, how you would have him *love* God, how you would have him *imitate* the life of our Saviour and his Apostles, how you would have him live *above* the world, *shining* in all the instances of a *heavenly life*, and then you have found out that spirit, which you ought to make the spirit of your own life.

I desire every reader to dwell a while upon this reflection, and perhaps he will find more conviction from it, than he imagines. Everyone can tell how good and pious he would have some people to be; everyone knows, how wise and reasonable a thing it is in a *Bishop*, to be entirely above the world, and be an eminent example of Christian perfection: As soon as you think of a *wise and ancient Bishop*, you fancy some exalted degree of piety, a living example of all those holy tempers, which you find described in the Gospel.

Now if you ask yourself, what is the happiest thing for a *young Clergyman* to do? You must be forced to answer, that nothing can be so happy and glorious for him, as to be like that excellent holy Bishop.

If you go on and ask, what is the happiest thing, for any *young Gentleman* or his *sisters* to do? The answer must be the same; that nothing can be so happy or glorious for them, as to live in such habits of piety, in such exercises of a Divine life, as this good old Bishop does. For everything that is great and glorious in Religion, is as much the true glory of every man or woman, as it is the glory of any Bishop. If high degrees of Divine love, if fervent charity, if spotless purity, if heavenly affection, if constant mortification, if frequent devotion be the best and happiest way of life for any Christian; it is so for every Christian.

Consider again; if you were to see a Bishop in the whole course of his life, living below his character, conforming to all the foolish tempers of the world, and governed by the same cares and fears which govern vain and worldly men, what would you think of him. Would you think that he was only guilty of a *small mistake?* No. You would condemn him, as erring in that which is not only the *most*, but the *only important* matter that relates to him. Stay a while in this consideration, till your mind is fully convinced, how miserable a mistake it is in a Bishop, to live a careless worldly life.

Whilst you are thinking in this manner, turn your thoughts towards some of your acquaintance, your brother, or sister, or any young person. Now if you see the common course of their lives to be not according to the doctrines of the Gospel, if you see that their way of life, cannot be said to be a sincere endeavour to enter in at the strait gate, you see something that you are to condemn, in the same degree, and for the same reasons. They do not commit a *small mistake*, but are wrong in that which is *their all*, and mistake their true happiness, as much as that *Bishop* does, who neglects the high duties of his calling. Apply this reasoning to yourself; if you find yourself living an idle, indulgent, vain life, choosing rather to gratify your passions, than to live up to the doctrines of Christianity, and practise the plain precepts of our blessed Lord, you have all that blindness and unreasonableness to charge upon yourself, that you can charge upon any irregular Bishop.

For all the virtues of the Christian life, its perfect purity, its heavenly tempers, are as much the sole rule of your life, as the sole rule of the life of a Bishop. If you neglect these holy tempers, if you do not eagerly aspire after them, if you do not show yourself a visible example of them, you are as much fallen from your true happiness, you are as great an *enemy* to yourself, and have made as *bad a choice*, as that Bishop, that chooses rather to enrich his family, than to be like an *Apostle*. For there is no reason, why you should not think the highest holiness, the most heavenly tempers, to be the duty and happiness of a *Bishop;* but what is as good a reason, why you should think the same tempers, to be the duty and happiness of all Christians. And as the wisest *Bishop* in the world, is he, who lives in the greatest heights of holiness, who is most exemplary in all the exercises of a Divine life, so the *wisest youth*, the wisest *woman*, whether married, or unmarried, is she, that lives in the highest degrees of Christian holiness, and all the exercises of a Divine and heavenly life.

Chapter XI.

Showing how great devotion, fills our lives with the greatest peace and happiness that can be enjoyed in this world.

SOME people will perhaps object, that all these rules of holy living unto God in all that we do, are too great a *restraint* upon human life; that it will be made too *anxious* a state, by thus introducing a regard to God in all our actions. And that by depriving ourselves of so many seemingly innocent pleasures, we shall render our lives *dull, uneasy*, and *melancholy*. To which it may be answered:

First, That these rules are prescribed for, and will certainly procure a quite contrary end. That instead of making our lives dull and melancholy, they will render them full of content and strong satisfactions. That by these rules, we only change the childish satisfactions of our *vain* and *sickly* passions, for the solid enjoyments, and real happiness of a *sound mind*.

Secondly, That as there is no foundation for comfort in the enjoyments of this life, but in the assurance that a wise and good God governeth the world, so the more we find out God in everything, the more we apply to him in every place, the more we look up to him in all our actions, the more we conform to his will, the more we act according to his wisdom, and imitate his goodness, by so much the more do we enjoy God, partake of the divine nature, and heighten and increase all that is *happy* and *comfortable* in human life.

Thirdly, He that is endeavouring to subdue, and root out of his mind all those passions of *pride*, *envy*, and *ambition*, which religion opposes, is doing more to make himself happy, even in this life, than he that is contriving means to indulge them.

For these passions are the causes of all the disquiets and vexations of human life: they are the *dropsies* and *fevers* of our minds, vexing them with false appetites, and restless cravings after such things as we do not want, and spoiling our taste for those things which are our proper good.

Do but imagine that you somewhere or other saw a man, that proposed *reason* as the rule of all his actions, that had no desires

but after such things as *nature* wants, and *religion* approves, that was as pure from all the motions of *pride*, *envy*, and *covetousness*, as from thoughts of *murder;* that in this freedom from worldly passions, he had a soul full of Divine love, wishing and praying that all men may have what they want of worldly things, and be partakers of eternal glory in the life to come.

Do but fancy a man living in this manner, and your own conscience will immediately tell you, that he is the happiest man in the world, and that it is not in the power of the richest fancy, to invent any higher happiness in the present state of life.

And on the other hand, if you suppose him to be in any degree *less perfect;* if you suppose him but subject to one foolish fondness, or vain passion, your own conscience will again tell you, that he so far lessens his own happiness, and robs himself of the true enjoyment of his other virtues. So true is it, that the *more* we live by the rules of religion, the more peaceful and happy do we render our lives.

Again, as it thus appears, that real happiness is only to be had from the *greatest degrees* of piety, the *greatest denials* of our passions, and the *strictest rules* of religion, so the same truth will appear from a consideration of *human misery.* If we look into the world, and view the disquiets and troubles of human life, we shall find that they are all owing to our violent and irreligious passions.

Now all trouble and uneasiness is founded in the *want* of something or other; would we therefore know the true cause of our troubles and disquiets, we must find out the cause of our wants; because that which creates, and increaseth our wants, does in the same degree create, and increase our trouble and disquiets.

God Almighty has sent us into the world with very few wants; *meat*, and *drink*, and *clothing*, are the only things necessary in life; and as these are only our present needs, so the present world is well furnished to supply these needs.

If a man had half the world in his power, he can make no more of it than this; as he wants it only to support an *animal* life, so is it unable to do anything else for him, or to afford him any other happiness.

This is the state of man, born with few wants, and into a large world, very capable of supplying them. So that one would reasonably suppose, that men should pass their lives in content and thankfulness to God, at least, that they should be free from violent disquiets and vexations, as being placed in a world, that has more than enough to relieve all their wants.

But if to all this we add, that this short life, thus furnished with all that we want in it, is only a short passage to eternal glory, where we shall be clothed with the brightness of *angels*, and enter into the joys of God, we might still more reasonably expect, that human life should be a state of peace, and joy, and delight in God. Thus it would certainly be, if reason had its full power over us.

But, alas! though God, and Nature, and Reason, make human life thus free from wants, and so full of happiness, yet our passions, in rebellion against God, against *nature* and *reason*, create a new world of evils, and fill human life with imaginary wants, and vain disquiets.

The man of *pride* has a thousand wants, which only his own pride has *created*; and these render him as full of trouble, as if God had created him with a *thousand appetites*, without creating anything that was proper to satisfy them. *Envy* and *Ambition* have also their endless wants, which disquiet the souls of men, and by their contradictory motions, render them as foolishly miserable, as those that want to *fly* and *creep* at the same time.

Let but any complaining, disquieted man, tell you the ground of his uneasiness, and you will plainly see, that he is the author of his own torment; that he is vexing himself at some imaginary evil, which will cease to torment him, as soon as he is content to be that which God, and nature, and reason, require him to be.

If you should see a man passing his days in disquiet, because he could not *walk* upon the *water*, or *catch birds* as they fly by him, you would readily confess, that such a one might thank himself for such uneasiness. But now if you look into all the most tormenting disquiets of life, you will find them all thus absurd; where people are only tormented by their own folly, and vexing themselves at such things, as no more concern them, nor are any more their proper good, than *walking* upon the *water*, or *catching birds*.

What can you conceive more silly and extravagant, than to suppose a man racking his brains, and studying night and day how to *fly? wandering* from his own house and home, wearying himself with *climbing* upon every ascent, *cringing* and *courting* everybody he meets, to lift him from the ground, bruising himself with *continual falls*, and at last breaking his neck? And all this, from an imagination, that it would be *glorious* to have the eyes of people gazing up at him, and mighty happy to *eat*, and *drink*, and *sleep*, at the top of the highest trees in the kingdom. Would you not readily own, that such a one was only disquieted by his *own folly?*

If you ask, what it signifies to suppose such silly creatures as these, as are nowhere to be found in human life?

It may be answered, that wherever you see an *ambitious* man, there you see this *vain and senseless flyer.*

Again, if you should see a man that had a large *pond* of *water*, yet living in *continual thirst*, not suffering himself to drink *half a draught*, for fear of lessening his pond; if you should see him wasting his time and strength, in *fetching more* water to his pond, always *thirsty*, yet always carrying a *bucket* of water in his hand, watching early and late to catch the *drops* of rain, gaping after every cloud, and running greedily into every *mire* and *mud*, in hopes of water, and always studying how to make every *ditch* empty itself into his *pond.* If you should see him grow *grey* and *old* in these anxious labours, and at last end a *careful*, *thirsty* life, by falling into his own *pond*, would you not say, that such a one was not only the author of all his own disquiets, but was foolish enough to be reckoned amongst *idiots* and *madmen?* But yet foolish and absurd as this character is, it does not represent half the follies, and absurd disquiets of the *covetous man.*

I could now easily proceed, to show the same effects of all our other passions, and make it plainly appear, that all our miseries, vexations, and complaints, are entirely of our own making, and that in the same absurd manner, as in these instances of the *covetous* and ambitious man. Look where you will, you will see all *worldly vexations*, but like the vexation of him, who was always in *mire* and *mud* in search of water to drink, when he had more at home, than was sufficient for an *hundred horses.*

Cœlia is always telling you, how *provoked* she is, what *intolerable shocking* things happen to her, what *monstrous* usage she suffers, and what *vexations* she meets with everywhere. She tells you that her patience is quite worn out, and there is no bearing the behaviour of people. Every *assembly* that she is at, sends her home provoked; something or other has been said, or done, that no *reasonable*, well-bred person ought to bear. *Poor people* who want her charity, are sent away with hasty answers, not because she has not a heart to part with any money, but because she is *too full* of some trouble of her own, to attend to the complaints of others. *Cœlia* has no business upon her hands, but to receive the income of a plentiful fortune; but yet by the doleful turn of her mind, you would be apt to think, that she had neither *food* nor *lodging.* If you see her look more pale than ordinary, if her lips tremble when she speaks to you, it is because she is just come from a *visit*, where *Lupus* took no notice at all of her, but talked all the time to *Lucinda*,

who has not half her fortune. When cross accidents have so disordered her spirits, that she is forced to send for the *Doctor*, to make her able to eat; she tells him, in great anger at Providence, that she never was well since she was born, and that she envies every beggar that she sees in health.

This is the disquiet life of *Cælia*, who has nothing to torment her but her own *spirit*.

If you could inspire her with *Christian humility*, you need do no more to make her as happy, as any person in the world. This virtue would make her thankful to God, for half so much health as she has had, and help her to enjoy more for the time to come. This virtue would keep off *tremblings* of the spirits, and *loss* of appetite, and her blood would need nothing else to sweeten it.

I have just touched upon these absurd characters, for no other end, but to convince you in the plainest manner, that the *strictest rules* of religion, are so far from rendering a life *dull*, *anxious*, and *uncomfortable*, (as is above objected) that, on the contrary, all the miseries, vexations, and complaints that are in the world, are all owing to the *want* of religion; being directly caused by those absurd passions, which religion teaches us to deny.

For all the *wants* which disturb human life, which make us uneasy to ourselves, quarrelsome with others, and unthankful to God; which weary us in vain labours and foolish anxieties; which carry us from project to project, from place to place, in a poor pursuit of we know not what, are the wants which neither God, nor nature, nor reason, hath subjected us to, but are solely infused into us by pride, envy, ambition, and covetousness.

So far therefore, as you reduce your desires to such things as *nature* and *reason* require; so far as you regulate all the motions of your heart by the *strict rules* of religion, so far you remove yourself from that infinity of *wants* and vexations, which torment every heart that is left to itself.

Most people indeed confess, that religion preserves us from a great many evils, and helps us in many respects to a more happy enjoyment of ourselves; but then they imagine, that this is only true of such a *moderate share* of religion, as only gently restrains us from the excesses of our passions. They suppose, that the *strict rules* and restraints of an *exalted* piety, are such *contradictions* to our nature, as must needs make our lives *dull* and *uncomfortable*.

Although the weakness of this objection, sufficiently appears from what hath been already said, yet I shall add one more word to it.

This objection supposes, that religion *moderately* practised,

adds *much* to the happiness of life; but that such heights of piety as the perfection of religion requireth, have a contrary effect.

It supposes therefore, that it is happy to be kept from the *excesses* of envy, but unhappy to be kept from *other* degrees of *envy*. That it is happy to be delivered from a *boundless* ambition, but unhappy to be without a more *moderate* ambition. It supposes also, that the happiness of life consists in a *mixture* of virtue and vice, a mixture of ambition and humility, charity and envy, heavenly affection and covetousness. All which is as absurd, as to suppose that it is happy to be free from excessive pains, but unhappy to be without more moderate pains; or that the happiness of *health* consisted, in being partly sick, and partly well.

For if humility be the peace and rest of the soul, then no one has so much happiness from humility, as he who is the most humble. If excessive envy is a torment of the soul, he most perfectly delivers himself from torment, who most perfectly extinguishes every spark of envy. If there is any peace and joy, in doing any action according to the will of God, he who brings the most of his actions to this rule, does most of all increase the peace and joy of his life.

And thus it is in every virtue; if you act up to every degree of it, the more happiness you have from it. And so of every vice; if you only abate its excesses, you do but little for yourself; but if you reject it in all degrees, then you feel the true ease and joy of a *reformed* mind.

As for example: If religion only restrains the *excesses* of revenge, but lets the spirit still live within you, in lesser instances, your religion may have made your life a little more outwardly decent, but not made you at all happier, or easier in yourself. But if you have once sacrificed all thoughts of revenge, in obedience to God, and are resolved to return good for evil at all times, that you may render yourself more like to God, and fitter for his mercy in the kingdom of love and glory; this is a height of virtue, that will make you feel its happiness.

Secondly, As to those satisfactions and enjoyments, which an exalted piety requireth us to deny ourselves, this deprives us of no real comfort of life.

For, 1*st*, Piety requires us to renounce no ways of life, where we can act *reasonably*, and offer what we do to the glory of God. All ways of life, all satisfactions and enjoyments, that are within these bounds, are no way denied us by the strictest rules of piety. Whatever you can do, or enjoy, as in the presence of

God, as his servant, as his rational creature, that has received reason and knowledge from him ; all that you can perform conformably to a rational nature, and the will of God, all this is allowed by the laws of piety. And will you think that your life will be uncomfortable, unless you may displease God, be a fool, and mad, and act contrary to that reason and wisdom which he has implanted in you ?

And as for those satisfactions, which we dare not offer to a holy God, which are only invented by the folly and corruption of the world, which inflame our passions, and sink our souls into grossness and sensuality, and render us incapable of the divine favour, either here or hereafter ; surely it can be no uncomfortable state of life, to be rescued by religion from such self-murder, and to be rendered capable of eternal happiness.

Let us suppose a *person*, destitute of that knowledge which we have from our senses, placed somewhere alone by himself, in the midst of a variety of things which he did not know how to use ; that he has by him *bread*, *wine*, *water*, *golden dust*, *iron*, *chains*, *gravel*, *garments*, *fire*, *&c.* Let it be supposed, that he has no knowledge of the *right use* of these things, nor any direction from his *senses* how to quench his *thirst*, or satisfy his *hunger*, or make *any use* of the things about him. Let it be supposed, that in his drought he puts *golden dust* into his eyes ; when his *eyes* smart, he puts *wine* into his *ears ;* that in his hunger, he puts *gravel* in his mouth ; that in pain, he loads himself with the *iron chains ;* that feeling cold, he puts his feet in the water ; that being frightened at the fire, he runs away from it; that being weary, he makes a *seat* of his *bread.* Let it be supposed, that through his ignorance of the right use of the things that are about him, he will vainly torment himself whilst he lives ; and at last die, *blinded* with *dust*, *choked* with *gravel*, and loaded with *irons.* Let it be supposed, that some good Being came to him, and showed him the nature and use of all the things that were about him, and gave him such *strict rules* of using them, as would certainly, if observed, make him the happier for all that he had, and deliver him from the pains of hunger, and thirst, and cold.

Now could you with any reason affirm, that those strict rules of using those things that were about him, had rendered that poor man's life *dull* and *uncomfortable ?*

Now this is in some measure, a representation of the *strict rules* of religion ; they only relieve our ignorance, save us from tormenting ourselves, and teach us to use *everything* about us to our proper advantage.

Man is placed in a world full of variety of things ; his ignorance makes him use many of them as absurdly, as the man

who puts *dust* in his *eyes* to relieve his *thirst*, or put on *chains* to remove pain.

Religion therefore here comes into his relief, and gives him *strict rules* of using everything that is about him; that by so using them suitably to his own nature, and the nature of the things, he may have always the pleasure of receiving a right benefit from them. It shows him what is strictly right in meat, and drink, and clothes; and that he has nothing else to expect from the things of this world, but to satisfy such wants of his own; and then to extend his assistance to all his brethren, that as far as he is able, he may help all his fellow-creatures, to the same benefit from the world that he hath.

It tells him, that this world is incapable of giving him any other happiness, and that all endeavours to be happy in *heaps* of *money*, or *acres* of land, in fine *clothes*, rich *beds*, stately *equipage*, and *show* and *splendour*, are only vain endeavours, ignorant attempts after impossibilities; these things being no more able to give the least degree of happiness, than *dust* in the eyes can cure thirst, or *gravel* in the mouth satisfy hunger; but like dust and gravel misapplied, will only serve to render him more unhappy by such an ignorant misuse of them.

It tells him, that although this world can do no more for him, than satisfy these wants of the body, yet that there is a much greater good prepared for man, than eating, drinking, and dressing; that it is yet invisible to his eyes, being too glorious for the apprehension of flesh and blood; but reserved for him to enter upon, as soon as this short life is over; where, in a new body, formed to an angelic likeness, he shall dwell in the light and glory of God to all eternity.

It tells him, that this state of glory will be given to all those, who make a *right use* of the things of this present world; who do not blind themselves with *golden dust*, or eat *gravel*, or groan under loads of *iron* of their own putting on; but use *bread*, *water*, *wine*, and *garments*, for such ends as are according to *nature* and *reason;* and who with faith and thankfulness, worship the kind giver of all that they enjoy here, and hope for hereafter.

Now can anyone say, that the strictest rules of such a religion as this, debar us of any of the comforts of life? Might it not as justly be said of those rules, which only hindered a man from *choking* himself with *gravel?* For the strictness of these rules, only consists in the exactness of their rectitude.

Who would complain of the severe strictness of a law, that without any exception forbade the putting of dust into our eyes? Who could think it too rigid, that there were no abate-

ments? Now this is the *strictness* of religion, it requires nothing of us strictly, or without abatements, but where every degree of the thing is wrong, where every indulgence does us some hurt.

If religion forbids all instances of *revenge* without any exception, it is because all revenge is of the nature of *poison;* and though we do not take so much as to put an end to life, yet if we take any at all, it corrupts the whole mass of blood, and makes it difficult to be restored to our former health.

If religion commands an *universal charity*, to love our neighbour as ourselves, to forgive and pray for all our enemies without any *reserve;* it is because all degrees of love are degrees of happiness, that strengthen and support the divine life of the soul and are as necessary to its health and happiness, as proper food is necessary to the health and happiness of the body.

If religion has laws against *laying up treasures upon earth*, and commands us to be content with food and raiment; it is because every other use of the world, is abusing it to our own vexation, and turning all its conveniences into snares and traps to destroy us. It is because this *plainness* and *simplicity* of life, secures us from the cares and pains of restless pride and envy, and makes it easier to keep that straight road, that will carry us to eternal life.

If religion saith, 'Sell that thou hast, and give to the poor,' it is because there is no other natural or reasonable use of our riches, no other way of making ourselves happier for them; it is because it is as *strictly* right to give others that which we do not want ourselves, as it is right to use so much as our own wants require. For if a man has more food than his own nature requires, how base and unreasonable is it, to invent *foolish ways* of wasting it, and make sport for his own *full belly*, rather than let his fellow-creatures have the same comfort from food, which he hath had? It is so far therefore from being a hard law of religion, to make this use of our riches, that a reasonable man would rejoice in that religion, which teaches him to be happier in that which he gives away, than in that which he keeps for himself; which teaches him to make spare food and raiment be greater blessings to him, than that which feeds and clothes his own body.

If religion requires us sometimes to *fast*, and *deny* our natural appetites, it is to lessen that struggle and war that is in our nature, it is to render our bodies fitter instruments of purity, and more obedient to the good motions of divine grace; it is to dry up the springs of our passions that war against the soul, to cool the flame of our blood, and render the mind more capable of divine meditations. So that although these abstinences give

some pain to the body, yet they so lessen the power of bodily appetites and passions, and so increase our taste of spiritual joys, that even these severities of religion, when practised with discretion, add much to the comfortable enjoyment of our lives.

If religion calleth us to a life of *watching* and *prayer,* it is because we live amongst a crowd of enemies, and are always in need of the assistance of God. If we are to confess and bewail our sins, it is because such confessions relieve the mind, and restore it to ease; as *burdens* and *weights* taken off the shoulders, relieve the body, and make it easier to itself. If we are to be frequent and fervent in holy petitions, it is to keep us steady in the sight of our true good, and that we may never want the happiness of a lively faith, a joyful hope, and well grounded trust in God. If we are to pray often, it is that we may be often happy in such secret joys as only prayer can give; in such communications of the divine presence, as will fill our minds with all the happiness, that beings not in heaven are capable of.

Was there anything in the world more worth our care, was there any exercise of the mind, or any conversation with men, that turned more to our advantage than this intercourse with God, we should not be called to such a continuance in prayer. But if a man considers what it is that he leaves when he retires to devotion, he will find it no small happiness, to be so often relieved from doing *nothing*, or nothing to the purpose; from dull idleness, unprofitable labour, or vain conversation. If he considers, that all that is in the world, and all that is doing in it, is only for the body, and bodily enjoyments, he will have reason to rejoice at those *hours* of prayer, which carry him to higher consolations, which raise him above these poor concerns, which open to his mind a scene of greater things, and accustom his soul to the hope and expectation of them.

If religion commands us to live *wholly* unto God, and to *do all* to his glory, it is because every other way, is living *wholly* against ourselves, and will end in our own shame and confusion of face.

As everything is *dark*, that God does not enlighten; as everything is *senseless*, that has not its share of knowledge from him; as nothing *lives*, but by partaking of life from him; as nothing *exists*, but because he commands it to be; so there is no *glory*, or *greatness,* but what is the glory or greatness of God.

We indeed may talk of *human glory*, as we may talk of *human life*, or *human knowledge;* but as we are sure that human life implies nothing of our *own*, but a dependent living in God, or enjoying so much life in God; so human glory, whenever we find it, must be only so much glory as we enjoy in the glory of God.

This is the state of all creatures, whether men, or angels; as

they make not themselves, so they enjoy nothing from themselves; if they are great, it must be only as great receivers of the gifts of God; their *power* can only be so much of the divine power acting in them; their *wisdom* can be only so much of the divine Wisdom shining within them; and their *light* and *glory*, only so much of the light and glory of God shining upon them.

As they are not *men* or *Angels*, because they had a mind to be so themselves, but because the will of God formed them to be what they are; so they cannot enjoy this or that happiness of men or angels, because they have a mind to it, but because it is the will of God, that such things be the happiness of men, and such things the happiness of angels. But now if God be thus all in all; if his will is thus the measure of all things, and all natures; if nothing can be done, but by his power; if nothing can be seen but by a light from him; if we have nothing to fear, but from his justice; if we have nothing to hope for, but from his goodness; if this is the nature of man, thus helpless in himself; if this is the state of all creatures, as well those in *heaven*, as those on *earth*; if they are nothing, can do nothing, can suffer no pain, nor feel any happiness, but so far, and in such degrees, as the power of God does all this; if this be the state of things, then how can we have the least glimpse of joy or comfort, how can we have any peaceful enjoyment of ourselves, but by living wholly unto that God, using and doing everything conformably to his will? A life thus devoted unto God, looking wholly unto him in all our actions, and doing all things suitably to his glory, is so far from being dull, and uncomfortable, that it creates new comforts in everything that we do.

On the contrary, would you see how *happy* they are who live according to their own wills, who cannot submit to the *dull* and *melancholy* business of a life devoted unto God; look at the man in the *parable*, to whom his Lord had given one talent.

He could not bear the thoughts of using his talent, according to the will of him from whom he had it, and therefore he chose to make himself happier in a way of his own. 'Lord,' says he, 'I knew thee, that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou 'hadst not sown, and gathering where thou hadst not strawed. 'And I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent, in the earth. Lo 'there thou hast that is thine.'

His Lord having convicted him out of his own mouth, despatches him with this sentence, 'Cast the unprofitable servant 'into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of 'teeth.'*

* Matt. xxv. 24.

Here you see how happy this man made himself, by not acting *wholly* according to his Lord's will. It was, according to his own account, a happiness of *murmuring* and *discontent;* I knew thee, says he, that thou wast an *hard man:* It was an happiness of *fears* and *apprehensions;* I was, says he, *afraid:* It was an happiness of *vain labours* and *fruitless travails:* I *went*, says he, and *hid thy talent:* and after having been a while the sport of foolish passions, tormenting fears, and fruitless labours, he is rewarded with darkness, eternal weeping, and gnashing of teeth.

Now this is the happiness of all those, who look upon a *strict* and exalted piety, that is, a right use of their talent, to be a dull and melancholy state of life.

They may live awhile free from the restraints and directions of Religion, but instead thereof, they must be under the absurd government of their passions: They must, like the man in the *parable*, live in *murmurings*, and *discontents*, in *fears*, and *apprehensions*. They may avoid the labour of doing good, of spending their time devoutly, of laying up treasures in heaven, of clothing the naked, of visiting the sick; but then they must, like this man, have *labours*, and *pains* in vain, that tend to no use or advantage, that do no good either to themselves, or others; they must *travel*, and *labour*, and *work*, and *dig*, to hide their talent in the earth. They must like him, at their Lord's coming, be convicted out of their own mouths, be accused by their own hearts, and have everything that they have said and thought of Religion, be made to show the justice of their condemnation to eternal darkness, weeping, and gnashing of teeth.

This is the purchase that they make, who avoid the strictness and perfection of Religion, in order to live happily.

On the other hand, would you see a short description of the happiness of a life rightly employed, wholly devoted to God, you must look at the man in the *parable*, to whom his Lord had given five talents. 'Lord,' says he, 'thou deliveredst unto me 'five talents; behold I have gained besides them five talents 'more. His Lord said unto him, well done thou good and 'faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I 'will make thee ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy 'of thy Lord.'

Here you see a life that is wholly intent upon the improvement of the talents, that is devoted wholly unto God, is a state of happiness, prosperous labours, and glorious success. Here are not, as in the former case, any *uneasy passions*, *murmurings*, *vain fears*, and *fruitless labours*. The man is not toiling, and digging in the earth for no end nor advantage; but his pious labours prosper in his hands, his happiness increases upon him;

the blessing of five becomes the blessing of ten talents ; and he is received with a 'well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.'

Now as the case of these men in the *parable*, left nothing else to their choice, but either to be happy in using their gifts to the *glory* of the Lord, or miserable by using them according to their *own humours* and *fancies ;* so the state of Christianity leaves us no other choice.

All that we have, all that we are, all that we enjoy, are only so many talents from God : if we use them to the ends of a pious and holy life, our five talents will become ten, and our labours will carry us into the joy of our Lord ; but if we abuse them to the gratification of our own passions, sacrificing the gifts of God to our own pride and vanity, we shall live here in vain labours and foolish anxieties, shunning Religion as a melancholy thing, accusing our Lord as a hard master, and then fall into everlasting misery.

We may for a while amuse ourselves with *names*, and *sounds*, and *shadows* of happiness ; we may talk of this or that greatness and dignity ; but if we desire real happiness, we have no other possible way to it, but by improving our talents, by so holily and piously using the *powers* and *faculties* of *men* in this present state, that we may be happy and glorious in the *powers* and *faculties* of *angels* in the world to come.

How ignorant therefore are they, of the nature of Religion, of the nature of man, and the nature of God, who think a life of *strict piety* and devotion to God, to be a *dull uncomfortable* state ; when it is so plain and certain, that there is neither comfort or joy to be found in anything else ?

Chapter XII.

The happiness of a life wholly devoted unto God, further proved, from the vanity, *the* sensuality, *and the* ridiculous, poor *enjoyments, which they are forced to take up with, who live according to their own humours. This represented in various characters.*

WE may still see more of the happiness of a life devoted unto God, by considering the poor contrivances for happiness, and the contemptible ways of life, which they are thrown into, who are not under the directions of a strict piety, but seeking after happiness by other methods.

If one looks at their lives, who live by no rule but their own humours and fancies; if one sees but what it is, which they call *joy*, and *greatness*, and *happiness;* if one sees how they rejoice, and repent, change and fly from one delusion to another; one shall find great reason to rejoice, that God hath appointed a *strait* and *narrow way*, that leadeth unto life, and that we are not left to the folly of our own minds, or forced to take up with such shadows of joys and happiness, as the weakness and folly of the world has invented. I say *invented*, because those things which make up the *joy and happiness* of the world are mere *inventions*, which have no foundation in nature and reason, are no way the proper good or happiness of man, no way perfect either in his body, or his mind, or carry him to his true *end*.

As for instance, when a man proposes to be happy in ways of *ambition*, by raising himself to some *imaginary heights* above other people; this is truly an *invention* of happiness, which has no foundation in nature, but is as mere a cheat, of our own making, as if a man should intend to make himself happy by *climbing* up a *ladder*.

If a *woman* seeks for happiness from *fine colours* or *spots* upon her face, from *jewels* and *rich clothes*, this is as merely an *invention* of happiness, as contrary to *nature* and *reason*, as if she should propose to make herself happy, by painting a *post*, and

putting the same finery upon it. It is in this respect that I call these joys and happiness of the world, mere *inventions* of happiness, because neither God, nor nature, nor reason, hath appointed them as such; but whatever appears joyful, or great, or happy in them, is entirely *created* or invented by the blindness and vanity of our own minds.

And it is on these inventions of happiness, that I desire you to cast your eye, that you may thence learn, how *great a good* Religion is, which delivers you from such a multitude of follies, and vain pursuits, as are the torment and vexation of minds, that wander from their true happiness in God.

Look at *Flatus*, and learn how miserable they are, who are left to the folly of their own passions.

Flatus is rich and in health, yet always uneasy, and always searching after happiness. Every time you visit him, you find some new project in his head, he is eager upon it as something that is more worth his while, and will do more for him than anything that is already past. Every new thing so seizes him, that if you were to take him from it, he would think himself quite undone. His sanguine temper, and strong passions, promise him so much happiness in everything, that he is always cheated, and is satisfied with nothing.

At his first setting out in life, *fine clothes* were his delight, his inquiry was only after the best *Tailors* and *Peruke-makers*, and he had no thoughts of excelling in anything but *dress*. He spared no expense, but carried every nicety to its greatest height. But this happiness not answering his expectations, he left off his *Brocades*, put on a plain coat, railed at *fops* and *beaux*, and gave himself up to *gaming* with great eagerness.

This new pleasure satisfied him for some time, he envied no other way of life. But being by the fate of *play* drawn into a *duel*, where he narrowly escaped his death, he left off the *dice*, and sought for happiness no longer amongst the *gamesters*.

The next thing that seized his wandering imagination, was the diversions of the *town*: and for more than a twelvemonth, you heard him talk of nothing but *Ladies*, *Drawing-rooms*, *Birth-nights*, *Plays*, *Balls*, and *Assemblies*. But growing sick of these, he had recourse to hard *drinking*. Here he had many a merry night, and met with stronger joys than any he had felt before. Here he had thoughts of setting up his staff, and looking out no further; but unluckily falling into a *fever*, he grew angry at all strong liquors, and took his leave of the happiness of being drunk.

The next attempt after happiness carried him into the *field*, for two or three years, nothing was so happy as *hunting;* he entered upon it with all his soul, and leaped more *hedges* and

ditches than had ever been known in so short a time. You never saw him but in a *green coat;* he was the envy of all that blow the *horn*, and always spoke to his dogs in great propriety of language. If you met him at home on a bad day, you would hear him blow his horn, and be entertained with the surprising accidents of the last *noble chase*. No sooner had *Flatus* outdone all the world in the breed and education of his *dogs*, built new *kennels*, new *stables*, and bought a new *hunting-seat*, but he immediately got sight of another happiness, hated the senseless noise and hurry of hunting, gave away his dogs, and was for some time after deep in the *pleasures* of *building*.

Now he invents new kinds of *dove-cotes*, and has such contrivances in his *barns* and *stables*, as were never seen before: He wonders at the dulness of the old builders, is wholly bent upon the improvement of *Architecture*, and will hardly hang a door in the ordinary way. He tells his friends, that he never was so delighted in anything in his life; that he has more happiness amongst his *brick* and *mortar*, than ever he had at *court;* and that he is contriving how to have some little matter to do that way as long as he lives.

The next year he leaves his house unfinished, complains to everybody of *Masons* and *Carpenters*, and devotes himself wholly to the happiness of *riding about*. After this, you can never see him but on *horseback*, and so highly delighted with this new way of life, that he would tell you, give him but his *horse* and a *clean country* to ride in, and you might take all the rest to yourself. A variety of new *saddles* and *bridles*, and a great change of horses, added much to the pleasure of this new way of life. But, however, having after some time tired both himself and his horses, the happiest thing he could think of next, was to go *abroad* and visit *foreign Countries;* and there indeed happiness exceeded his imagination, and he was only uneasy that he had begun so fine a life no sooner. The next month he returned home, unable to bear any longer the impertinence of *foreigners*.

After this he was a great *student* for one whole year; he was up early and late at his *Italian grammar*, that he might have the happiness of understanding the *opera*, whenever he should hear one, and not be like those *unreasonable* people, that are pleased with they know not what.

Flatus is very ill-natured, or otherwise, just as his affairs happen to be when you visit him; if you find him when some project is almost worn out, you will find a peevish ill-bred man; but if you had seen him just as he entered upon his *riding regimen*, or begun to excel in sounding of the horn, you had been saluted with great civility.

Flatus is now at a full stand, and is doing what he never did in his life before, he is *reasoning* and *reflecting* with himself. He loses several days, in considering which of his *cast-off* ways of life he should try again.

But here a new project comes in to his relief. He is now living upon *herbs*, and running about the country, to get himself into as *good wind* as any *running-footman* in the kingdom.

I have been thus circumstantial, in so many foolish particulars of this kind of life, because I hope, that every particular folly that you here see, will naturally turn itself into an argument, for the wisdom and happiness of a religious life.

If I could lay before you a particular account of all the circumstances of terror and distress, that daily attend a life at *sea*, the more particular I was in the account, the more I should make you feel and rejoice in the happiness of living upon the *land*.

In like manner, the more I enumerate the *follies*, *anxieties*, *delusions*, and restless desires which go through every part of a life devoted to human passions, and worldly enjoyments, the more you must be affected with that peace, and rest, and solid content, which religion gives to the souls of men.

If you but just cast your eye upon a *madman*, or a *fool*, it perhaps signifies little or nothing to you ; but if you were to attend them for some days, and observe the lamentable madness and stupidity of all their actions, this would be an affecting sight, and would make you often bless yourself for the enjoyment of your reason and senses.

Just so, if you are only told in the gross, of the folly and madness of a life devoted to the world, it makes little or no impression upon you ; but if you are shown how such people live every day ; if you see the continual folly and madness of all their particular actions and designs, this would be an affecting sight, and make you bless God, for having given you a greater happiness to aspire after.

So that *characters* of this kind, the more folly and ridicule they have in them, provided that they be but natural, are most useful to correct our minds ; and therefore are nowhere more proper than in books of devotion, and practical piety. And as in several cases, we best learn the nature of things, by looking at that which is contrary to them ; so perhaps we best apprehend the *excellency* of wisdom, by contemplating the *wild extravagances* of folly.

I shall therefore continue this method a little further, and endeavour to recommend the happiness of piety to you ; by showing you in some other instances, how miserably and poorly they live, who live without it.

But you will perhaps say, that the ridiculous, restless life of *Flatus*, is not the common state of those who resign themselves up to live by their own humours, and neglect the strict rules of religion; and that therefore it is not so great an argument of the happiness of a religious life, as I would make it.

I answer, that I am afraid it is one of the most *general characters* in life; and that few people can read it, without seeing something in it that belongs to themselves. For where shall we find that wise and happy man, who has not been eagerly pursuing different appearances of happiness, sometimes thinking it was here, and sometimes there?

And if people were to divide their lives into particular stages, and ask themselves what they were pursuing, or what it was which they had chiefly in view, when they were *twenty* years old, what at *twenty-five*, what at *thirty*, what at *forty*, what at *fifty*, and so on, till they were brought to their last bed; numbers of people would find, that they had liked, and disliked, and pursued as many different appearances of happiness, as are to be seen in the life of *Flatus*.

And thus it must necessarily be, more or less, with all those who propose any other happiness, than that which arises from a strict and regular piety.

But *Secondly*, let it be granted, that the *generality* of people are not of such restless, fickle tempers as *Flatus;* the difference then is only this, *Flatus* is continually changing and trying something new, but others are content with some one state; they do not leave *gaming*, and then fall to *hunting*. But they have so much *steadiness* in their tempers, that some seek after no other happiness, but that of *heaping* up riches; others grow old in the sports of the *field;* others are content to *drink* themselves to death, without the least inquiry after any other happiness.

Now is there anything more *happy*, or *reasonable*, in such a life as this, than in the life of *Flatus?* Is it not as great and desirable, as wise and happy, to be constantly changing from one thing to another, as to be nothing else but a *gatherer* of money, a *hunter*, a *gamester*, or a *drunkard*, all your life?

Shall religion be looked upon as a burden, as a dull and melancholy state, for calling men from such *happiness* as this, to live according to the laws of God, to labour after the perfection of their nature, and prepare themselves for an endless state of joy and glory in the presence of God?

But turn your eyes now another way, and let the *trifling joys*, the *gewgaw-happiness* of *Feliciana*, teach you how wise they are, what delusion they escape, whose hearts and hopes are fixed upon an happiness in God.

If you were to live with *Feliciana* but one half year, you would see all the happiness that she is to have as long as she lives. She has no more to come, but the poor repetition of that which could never have pleased once, but through a littleness of mind, and want of thought.

She is to be again dressed fine, and keep her visiting day. She is again to change the colour of her *clothes*, again to have a new *head*, and again put *patches* on her face. She is again to see who acts best at the *playhouse*, and who sings finest at the *opera*. She is again to make ten visits in a day, and be ten times in a day trying to talk artfully, easily, and politely about *nothing*.

She is to be again delighted with some new fashion; and again angry at the change of some old one. She is to be again at cards, and gaming at midnight, and again in bed at noon. She is to be again pleased with hypocritical compliments, and again disturbed at imaginary affronts. She is to be again pleased with her good luck at gaming, and again tormented with the loss of her money. She is again to prepare herself for a birth-night; and again see the town full of good company. She is again to hear the cabals and intrigues of the town; again to have secret intelligence of private amours, and early notice of marriages, quarrels, and partings.

If you see her come out of her chariot more briskly than usual, converse with more spirit, and seem fuller of joy than she was last week, it is because there is some surprising new dress, or new diversion just come to town.

These are all the *substantial* and *regular* parts of *Feliciana's* happiness; and she never knew a pleasant day in her life, but it was owing to some one, or more, of these things.

It is for this happiness, that she has always been deaf to the reasonings of religion, that her heart has been too gay and cheerful to consider what is *right* or *wrong* in regard to eternity; or to listen to the sound of such dull words, as *wisdom*, *piety*, and *devotion*.

It is for fear of losing some of this happiness, that she dares not meditate on the immortality of her soul, consider her relation to God, or turn her thoughts towards those joys, which make Saints and Angels infinitely happy in the presence and glory of God.

But now let it be here observed, that as poor a round of happiness as this appears, yet most women, that avoid the restraints of religion for a gay life, must be content with very small parts of it. As they have not *Feliciana's* fortune and figure in the world, so they must give away the comforts of a pious life, for a very small part of her happiness.

And if you look into the world, and observe the lives of those women, whom no arguments can persuade to live wholly unto God, in a wise and pious employment of themselves, you will find most of them to be such, as lose all the comforts of religion, without gaining the tenth part of *Feliciana's* happiness. They are such as spend their time and fortunes, only in mimicking the pleasures of richer people; and rather look and long after, than enjoy those delusions, which are only to be purchased by considerable fortunes.

But if a woman of *high* birth, and *great* fortune, having read the Gospel, should rather wish to be an *under servant* in some pious family, where wisdom, piety, and great devotion, directed all the actions of every day; if she should rather wish this than to live at the top of *Feliciana's* happiness; I should think her neither *mad*, nor *melancholy;* but that she judged as rightly of the spirit of the Gospel, as if she had rather wished to be poor *Lazarus at the gate*, than to be the rich man 'clothed in purple and fine linen, and faring sumptuously every 'day.'

But to proceed: Would you know what an happiness it is, to be governed by the wisdom of religion, and to be devoted to the joys and hopes of a pious life, look at the poor condition of *Succus*, whose greatest happiness, is a *good night's* rest in bed, and a *good meal* when he is up. When he talks of happiness, it is always in such expressions, as show you, that he has only his *bed* and his *dinner* in his thoughts.

This regard to his *meals* and *repose*, makes *Succus* order all the rest of his time with relation to them. He will undertake no business that may hurry his spirits, or break in upon his hours of *eating* and *rest*. If he reads, it shall only be for half an hour, because that is sufficient to amuse the spirits; and he will read something that may make him laugh, as rendering the body fitter for its *food* and *rest*. Or if he has at any time a mind to indulge a grave thought, he always has recourse to a useful treatise upon the *ancient cookery*. *Succus* is an enemy to all *party-matters*, having made it an observation, that there is as good eating amongst the *Whigs*, as the *Tories*.

He talks coolly and moderately upon all subjects, and is as fearful of falling into a passion, as of catching cold; being very positive, that they are both equally injurious to the *stomach*. If ever you see him more hot than ordinary, it is upon some provoking occasion, when the dispute about cookery runs very high, or in the defence of some beloved dish, which has often made him happy. But he has been so long upon these subjects, is so well acquainted with all that can be said on both sides, and has

so often answered all objections, that he generally decides the matter with great gravity.

Succus is very loyal, and as soon as ever he likes any wine, he drinks the king's health with all his heart. Nothing could put rebellious thoughts into his head, unless he should live to see a *Proclamation* against eating of *Pheasants' eggs.*

All the hours that are not devoted either to *repose*, or *nourishment*, are looked upon by *Succus* as *waste* or *spare time.* For this reason he lodges near a *coffee-house* and a *tavern*, that when he rises in the morning, he may be near the *news*, and when he parts at night, he may not have far to bed. In the morning you always see him in the same place in the *coffee-room*, and if he seems more attentively engaged than ordinary, it is because some *criminal* is broke out of *Newgate*, or some *Lady* was robbed last night, but they cannot tell where. When he has learnt all that he can, he goes home to settle the matter with the Barber's boy, that comes to shave him.

The next *waste-time* that lays upon his hands, is from dinner to supper. And if melancholy thoughts ever come into his head, it is at this time, when he is often left to himself for an hour or more, and that after the greatest pleasure he knows is just over. He is afraid to sleep, because he has heard, it is not healthful at that time, so that he is forced to refuse so welcome a guest.

But here he is soon relieved, by a settled method of playing at cards, till it is time to think of some little nice matter for supper.

After this, *Succus* takes his glass, talks of the excellency of the *English constitution*, and praises that *Minister* the most, who keeps the best table.

On a *Sunday* night you may sometimes hear him condemning the iniquity of the *town-rakes;* and the bitterest thing that he says against them, is this, that he verily believes, some of them are so abandoned, as not to have a *regular meal*, or a *sound night's* sleep in a week.

At eleven, *Succus* bids all good night, and parts in great friendship. He is presently in bed, and sleeps till it is time to go to the coffee-house next morning.

If you were to live with *Succus* for a twelvemonth, this is all that you would see in his life, except a few *curses* and *oaths* that he uses as occasion offers.

And now I cannot help making this Reflection :

That as I believe the most likely means in the world, to inspire a person with true piety, was to have seen the example of some eminent professor of Religion; so the next thing that is likely to fill one with the same zeal, is to see the *folly*, the *baseness*,

and *poor* satisfactions of a life destitute of Religion. As the one excites us to love and admire the wisdom and greatness of Religion, so the other may make us fearful of living without it.

For who can help blessing God for the *means of grace*, and for the *hope of glory*, when he sees what variety of folly they sink into, who live without it? Who would not heartily engage in all the labours and exercises of a pious life, be 'steadfast, immovable, and always abounding in the work of the Lord,' when he sees, what *dull* sensuality, what *poor* views, what *gross* enjoyments they are left to, who seek for happiness in other ways.

So that whether we consider the greatness of Religion, or the littleness of all other things, and the meanness of all other enjoyments, there is nothing to be found in the whole nature of things, for a thoughtful mind to rest upon, but a happiness in the hopes of Religion.

Consider now with yourself, how unreasonably it is pretended, that a life of *strict* piety must be a *dull* and *anxious* state? For can it with any reason be said, that the duties and restraints of Religion must render our lives heavy and melancholy, when they only deprive us of such happiness, as has been here laid before you?

Must it be tedious and tiresome, to live in the continual exercise of charity, devotion, and temperance, to act wisely and virtuously, to do good to the utmost of your power, to imitate the divine perfections, and prepare yourself for the enjoyment of God? Must it be dull and tiresome, to be delivered from blindness and vanity, from false hopes, and vain fears, to improve in holiness, to feel the comforts of conscience in all your actions, to know that God is your friend, that all must work for your good, that neither life nor death, neither men nor devils can do you any harm; but that all your sufferings and doings, that are offered unto God, all your watchings and prayers, and labours of love and charity, all your improvements, are in a short time to be rewarded with everlasting glory in the presence of God; must such a state as this be *dull* and *tiresome*, for want of such happiness, as *Flatus*, or *Feliciana* enjoys?

Now if this cannot be said, then there is no happiness or pleasure lost, by being strictly pious, nor has the devout man anything to envy in any other state of life. For all the art and contrivance in the world, without Religion, cannot make more of human life, or carry its happiness to any greater height, than *Flatus* and *Feliciana* have done.

The finest *wit*, the greatest *genius* upon earth, if not governed by Religion, must be as *foolish*, and *low* and *vain* in his methods of happiness, as the *poor Succus*.

If you were to see a man duly endeavouring all his life to satisfy his thirst, by holding up one and the same *empty cup* to his mouth, you would certainly despise his ignorance.

But if you should see others of *brighter parts*, and *finer understandings*, ridiculing the dull satisfaction of *one cup*, and thinking to satisfy their own thirst, by a variety of gilt and golden empty cups; would you think that these were ever the *wiser*, or *happier*, or *better* employed, for their *finer parts?*

Now this is all the difference that you can see in the happiness of this life.

The *dull* and *heavy* soul, may be content with *one empty appearance* of happiness, and be continually trying to hold *one* and the *same empty cup* to his mouth all his life. But then let the *wit*, the *great scholar*, the *fine genius*, the great *statesman*, the polite *gentleman*, lay all their heads together, and they can only show you, *more*, and *various empty appearances* of happiness; give them all the world into their hands, let them cut and carve as they please, they can only make a greater variety of *empty cups*.

So that if you do not think it hard to be deprived of the pleasures of *gluttony* for the sake of Religion, you have no reason to think it hard to be restrained from any other worldly pleasure. For search as deep, and look as far as you will, there is nothing here to be found, that is *nobler*, or *greater*, than high eating and drinking, unless you look for it in the wisdom and laws of Religion.

And if all that is in the world, are only so many *empty cups*, what does it signify, which you take, or how many you take, or how many you have?

If you would but use yourself to such meditations as these, to reflect upon the vanity of *all orders* of life without piety, to consider how all the ways of the world, are only so many different ways of error, blindness, and mistake; you would soon find your heart made wiser and better by it. These meditations would awaken your soul into a zealous desire of that solid happiness, which is only to be found in recourse to God.

Examples of great piety are not now common in the world, it may not be your happiness to live within sight of any, or to have your virtue inflamed by their light and fervour. But the misery and folly of worldly men, is what meets your eyes in every place, and you need not look far to see, how poorly, how vainly men dream away their lives, for want of religious wisdom.

This is the reason, that I have laid before you so many characters of the vanity of a worldly life, to teach you to make a benefit of the corruption of the age, and that you may be made

wise, though not by the sight of what piety is, yet by seeing what misery and folly reigns, where piety is not.

If you would turn your mind to such reflections as these, your own observation would carry this instruction much further, and all your conversation and acquaintance with the world, would be a daily conviction to you of the necessity of seeking some greater happiness, than all the poor enjoyments of this world can give.

To meditate upon the perfection of the divine attributes, to contemplate the glories of Heaven, to consider the joys of Saints and Angels, living for ever in the brightness and glory of the divine presence; these are the meditations of souls advanced in piety, and not so suited to every capacity.

But to see and consider the *emptiness* and error of all worldly happiness; to see the *grossness* of sensuality, the *poorness* of pride, the *stupidity* of covetousness, the *vanity* of dress, the *delusion* of honour, the *blindness* of our passions, the *uncertainty* of our lives, and the *shortness* of all worldly projects; these are meditations that are suited to all capacities, fitted to strike all minds; they require no depth of thought, or sublime speculation, but are forced upon us by all our senses, and taught us by almost everything that we see and hear.

This is that 'wisdom that crieth, and putteth forth her voice'* in the streets, that standeth at all our doors, that appealeth to all our senses, teaching us in everything, and everywhere, by all that we see, and all that we hear, by births and burials, by sickness and health, by life and death, by pains and poverty, by misery and vanity, and by all the changes and chances of life, that there is nothing else for man to look after, no other end in nature for him to drive at, but a happiness which is only to be found in the hopes and expectations of Religion.

* Prov. viii. 1.

Chapter XIII.

That not only a life of vanity, *or* sensuality, *but even the most* regular *kind of life, that is not governed by* great *devotion, sufficiently shows its* miseries, *its* wants, *and* emptiness *to the eyes of all the world. This represented in various characters.*

IT is a very remarkable saying of our Lord and Saviour to his disciples, in these words: 'Blessed are your eyes, for 'they see, and your ears, for they hear.' They teach us two things: *First,* That the *dulness* and *heaviness* of men's minds, with regard to spiritual matters, is so great, that it may justly be compared to the want of *eyes* and *ears.*

Secondly, that God has so filled every *thing,* and every *place,* with motives and arguments for a godly life, that they who are but so blessed, so happy as to use their eyes and their ears, must needs be affected with them.

Now though this was in a more especial manner, the case of those whose senses were witnesses of the life and miracles and doctrines of our blessed Lord, yet it is as truly the case of all Christians at this time. For the reasons of Religion, the calls to piety, are so written and engraved upon everything, and present themselves so strongly, and so constantly to all our senses in everything that we meet, that they can only be disregarded by *eyes* that see not, and *ears* that hear not.

What greater motive to a religious life, than the *vanity,* the *poorness* of all worldly enjoyments? And yet who can help seeing and feeling this every day of his life?

What greater *call* to look towards God, than the pains, the sickness, the *crosses,* and vexations of this life; and yet whose eyes and ears are not daily witnesses of them?

What *miracles* could more strongly appeal to our senses, or what message from heaven speak louder to us, than the *daily dying* and departure of our fellow-creatures?

So that the one thing needful, or the great end of life, is not left to be discovered by fine reasoning and deep reflections; but is pressed upon us in the plainest manner, by the experience of all our senses, by everything that we meet with in life.

Let us but *intend* to *see* and *hear*, and then the whole world becomes a book of wisdom and instruction to us all; all that is *regular* in the order of nature, all that is *accidental* in the course of things, all the mistakes and disappointments that happen to ourselves, all the miseries and errors that we see in other people; become so many plain lessons of advice to us; teaching us with as much assurance as an Angel from Heaven, that we can no ways raise ourselves to any true happiness, but by turning all our thoughts, our wishes, and endeavours, after the happiness of another life.

It is this right use of the world, that I would lead you into, by directing you to turn your eyes upon every shape of human folly, that you may thence draw fresh arguments and motives, of living to the best and greatest purposes of your creation.

And if you would but carry this *intention* about you, of profiting by the follies of the world, and of learning the *greatness* of Religion, from the *littleness* and *vanity* of every other way of life; if, I say, you would but carry this intention in your mind, you would find, every day, every place, and every person, a fresh proof of their wisdom, who choose to live wholly unto God. You would then often return home, the wiser, the better, and the more strengthened in Religion, by everything that has fallen in your way.

Octavius is a learned, ingenious man, well versed in most parts of literature, and no stranger to any kingdom in *Europe*. The other day, being just recovered from a lingering *fever*, he took upon him to talk thus to his friends.

My *glass*, says he, is almost run out; and your eyes see how many marks of *age* and *death* I bear about me: But I plainly feel myself sinking away faster than any standers-by imagine. I fully believe, that one year more will conclude my reckoning.

The attention of his friends was much raised by such a declaration, expecting to hear something truly excellent from so learned a man, who had but a *year* longer to live. When *Octavius* proceeded in this manner: For these reasons, says he, my friends, I have left off all *taverns*, the wine of those places is not good enough for me in this decay of nature. I must now be *nice* in what I drink; I cannot pretend to do, as I have done; and therefore am resolved to furnish my own *cellar* with a little of the very best, though it costs me ever so much.

I must also tell you, my friends, that age forces a man to be *wise* in many other respects, and makes us change many of our opinions and practices.

You know how much I have liked a large acquaintance; I now condemn it as an error. Three or four *cheerful, diverting*

companions, is all that I now desire; because I find, that in my present infirmities, if I am left *alone*, or to *grave* company, I am not so easy to myself.

A few days after *Octavius* had made this declaration to his friends, he relapsed into his former illness, was committed to a *nurse*, who closed his eyes, before his fresh parcel of wine came in.

Young *Eugenius*, who was present at this discourse, went home a new man, with full resolutions of devoting himself wholly unto God.

I never, says *Eugenius*, was so deeply affected with the wisdom and importance of religion, as when I saw how *poorly* and *meanly* the learned *Octavius* was to leave the world, through the want of it.

How often had I envied his *great learning*, his skill in *languages*, his knowledge of *antiquity*, his *address*, and fine manner of *expressing* himself upon all subjects! But when I saw how *poorly* it all ended, what was to be the *last year* of such a life, and how foolishly the master of all these accomplishments was then forced to talk, for want of being acquainted with the *joys* and *expectations* of piety, I was thoroughly convinced, that there was nothing to be envied or desired, but a *life* of true piety; nor anything so *poor* and *comfortless*, as a *death* without it.

Now as the young *Eugenius* was thus edified and instructed in the present case; so if you are so happy as to have anything of his *thoughtful* temper, you will meet with variety of instruction of this kind; you will find that arguments for the wisdom and happiness of a strict piety, offer themselves in all places, and appeal to all your senses in the plainest manner.

You will find, that all the world *preaches* to an *attentive* mind; and that if you have but ears to hear, almost everything you meet, teaches you some lesson of wisdom.

But now, if to these admonitions and instructions, which we receive from our senses, from an experience of the state of human life; if to these we add the lights of religion, those great truths which the Son of God has taught us; it will be then as much past all doubt, that there is but one *happiness* for man, as that there is but one God.

For since religion teaches us, that our souls are immortal, that piety and devotion will carry them to an eternal enjoyment of God; and that carnal worldly tempers will sink them into an everlasting misery with damned spirits; what gross nonsense and stupidity is it, to give the name of *joy* or *happiness* to anything but that, which carries us to this joy and happiness in God?

Were *all* to die with our *bodies*, there might be some pretence for those *different sorts* of happiness, that are now so much talked of; but since *our all* begins at the death of our bodies; since all men are to be immortal, either in misery or happiness, in a world entirely different from this; since they are all hastening hence at all uncertainties, as fast as death can cut them down; some in *sickness*, some in *health*, some *sleeping*, some *waking*, some at *midnight*, others at *cock-crowing*, and all at hours that they know not of; is it not certain, that no man can exceed another in joy and happiness, but so far as he exceeds him in those virtues, which fit him for a happy death?

Cognatus is a sober, regular *Clergyman*, of good repute in the world, and well esteemed in his parish. All his parishioners say he is an *honest man*, and very notable at making a *bargain*. The farmers listen to him with great attention, when he talks of the properest time of selling corn.

He has been for twenty years a diligent observer of *markets*, and has raised a considerable fortune by good management.

Cognatus is very *orthodox*, and full of *esteem* of our *English* Liturgy; and if he has not prayers on *Wednesdays* and *Fridays*, it is because his *Predecessor* had not used the parish to any such custom.

As he cannot serve both his *livings* himself, he makes it matter of *conscience* to keep a *sober curate* upon one of them, whom he *hires* to take care of all the souls in the parish, at as cheap a rate as a sober man can be procured.

Cognatus has been very prosperous all his time; but still he has had the uneasiness and vexations that they have, who are deep in worldly business. *Taxes*, *losses*, *crosses*, *bad mortgages*, *bad tenants*, and the hardness of the times, are frequent subjects of his conversation; and a good or bad *season* has a great effect upon his spirits.

Cognatus has no other end in growing rich, but that he may leave a considerable fortune to a *Niece*, whom he has *politely* educated in expensive finery, by what he has saved out of the tithes of *two livings*.

The neighbours look upon *Cognatus* as an happy clergyman, because they see him (as they call it) in *good circumstances;* and some of them intend to dedicate their own sons to the Church, because they see how well it has succeeded with *Cognatus*, whose father was but an *ordinary man*.

But now if *Cognatus*, when he first entered into holy orders, had perceived how absurd a thing it is to grow *rich* by the Gospel; if he had proposed to himself the example of some *primitive father;* if he had had the piety of the great St. *Austin*

in his eye, who durst not enrich any of his relations out of the revenue of the Church, if, instead of twenty years' care to lay up treasures upon earth, he had distributed the income of every year, in the most Christian acts of charity and compassion.

If instead of tempting his *Niece* to be proud, and providing her with such ornaments, as the *Apostle* forbids, he had clothed, comforted, and assisted numbers of *widows*, *orphans*, and distressed, who were all to appear for him at the last day.

If instead of the cares and anxieties of *bad bonds*, *troublesome mortgages*, and *ill bargains*, he had had the constant comfort of knowing, that his treasure was securely laid up, where neither moth corrupteth, nor thieves break through and steal: Could it with any reason be said, that he had mistaken the spirit and dignity of his order, or lessened any of that happiness, which is to be found in his sacred employments?

If instead of rejoicing at the happiness of a second *living*, he had thought it as unbecoming the office of a clergyman, to *traffic* for gain in *holy things*, as to open a *shop*.

If he had thought it better to recommend some *honest labour* to his *Niece*, than to support her in *idleness* by the labours of a *curate;* better that she should want *fine clothes* and a rich husband, than that *cures of souls* should be farmed about, and brother clergymen not suffered to *live* by those altars at which they serve. If this had been the spirit of *Cognatus*, could it with any reason be said, that these rules of religion, this strictness of piety, had robbed *Cognatus* of any real happiness? Could it be said, that a life thus governed by the spirit of the Gospel, must be *dull* and *melancholy*, if compared to that of raising a fortune for a *Niece?*

Now as this cannot be said in the present case, so in every other kind of life, if you enter into the particulars of it, you will find, that however easy and prosperous it may seem, yet you cannot add piety to any part of it, without adding so much of a better joy and happiness to it.

Look now at that condition of life, which draws the envy of all eyes.

Negotius is a temperate honest man. He served his time under a master of great trade, but has, by his own management, made it a more considerable business than ever it was before. For thirty years last past, he has wrote fifty or sixty letters in a week, and is busy in corresponding with all parts of *Europe*. The general good of trade seems to *Negotius* to be the general good of life; whomsoever he admires, whatever he commends or condemns, either in Church or State, is admired, commended, or condemned, with some regard to trade.

As money is continually pouring in upon him, so he often lets

it go in various kinds of expense and generosity, and sometimes in ways of charity.

Negotius is always ready to join in any public contribution: If a *purse* is making at any place where he happens to be, whether it be to buy a *plate* for a horse-race, or to redeem a *prisoner* out of gaol, you are always sure of having something from him.

He has given a fine *ring of bells* to a Church in the country; and there is much expectation, that he will some time or other make a more beautiful *front* to the *market-house*, than has yet been seen in any place. For it is the generous spirit of *Negotius*, to do nothing in a mean way.

If you ask what it is, that has secured *Negotius* from all *scandalous vices*, it is the same thing that has kept him from all *strictness of devotion*, it is his great business. He has always had too many important things in his head, his thoughts have been too much employed, to suffer him to fall either into any courses of *rakery*, or to feel the necessity of an *inward*, *solid* piety.

For this reason he hears of the pleasures of debauchery, and the pleasures of piety, with the same indifferency; and has no more desire of living in the one, than in the other, because neither of them consist with that turn of mind, and multiplicity of business, which are his happiness.

If *Negotius* was asked, What is it which he drives at in life? he would be as much at a loss for an answer, as if he was asked, what any other person is thinking of. For though he always seems to himself to know what he is doing, and has many things in his head, which are the motives of his actions; yet he cannot tell you of any *one general end* of life, that he has chosen with deliberation, as being truly worthy of all his labour and pains.

He has several confused notions in his head, which have been a long time there; such as these, *viz.*, That it is *something great* to have more business than other people, to have more dealings upon his hands than an hundred of the same profession; to grow continually richer and richer, and to raise an immense fortune before he dies. The thing that seems to give *Negotius* the greatest life and spirit, and to be most in his thoughts, is an expectation that he has, that he shall die richer than any of his business ever did.

The generality of people, when they think of happiness, think upon *Negotius*, in whose life every instance of happiness is supposed to meet; sober, prudent, rich, prosperous, generous, and charitable.

Let us now, therefore, look at this condition in another, but truer light.

Let it be supposed, that this same *Negotius* was a painful,

laborious man, every day deep in variety of affairs; that he neither drank, nor debauched; but was sober and regular in his business. Let it be supposed, that he grew old in this course of trading; and that the *end* and *design* of all this labour, and care, and application to business, was only this, that he might die possessed of more than an hundred thousand pair of *boots* and *spurs*, and as many great coats.

Let it be supposed, that the sober part of the world say of him when he is dead, that he was a great and happy man, a thorough master of business, and had acquired a hundred thousand pair of *boots* and *spurs* when he died.

Now if this was really the case, I believe it would be readily granted, that a life of such business was as poor and ridiculous, as any that be invented. But it would puzzle anyone to show, that a man that has spent all his time and thoughts in business and hurry that he might die, as it is said, worth an hundred thousand pounds, is any whit wiser than he, who has taken the same pains, to have as many pair of *boots* and *spurs* when he leaves the world.

For if the *temper* and *state* of our souls be our *whole state;* if the only end of life be to die as *free* from sin, and as *exalted* in virtue as we can; if naked as we came, so naked are we to return, and to stand a trial before Christ, and his holy angels, for everlasting happiness or misery; what can it possibly signify what a man had, or had not, in this world? What can it signify what you *call* those things which a man has left behind him; whether you call them *his* or *anyone's* else; whether you *call* them *trees*, or *fields*, or *birds* and *feathers;* whether you *call* them an hundred *thousand pounds*, or an hundred thousand pair of *boots* and *spurs?* I say, *call* them; for the *things* signify no more to him than the *names*.

Now it is easy to see the folly of a life thus spent, to furnish a man with such a number of *boots* and *spurs*. But yet there needs no better faculty of seeing, no finer understanding, to see the folly of a life spent, in making a man a possessor of *ten towns* before he dies.

For if when he has got all his *towns*, or all his *boots*, his soul is to go to its *own place* amongst separate spirits, and his body be laid by in a *coffin*, till the last trumpet calls him to judgment; where the inquiry will be, how *humbly*, how *devoutly*, how *purely*, how *meekly*, how *piously*, how *charitably*, how *heavenly*, we have *spoken*, *thought*, and *acted*, whilst we were in the body; how can we say, that he who has worn out his life in raising an *hundred thousand pounds*, has acted wiser for himself, than he who has had the same *care*, to procure an hundred thousand of *anything* else?

But further: Let it now be supposed, that *Negotius*, when he first entered into business, happening to read the Gospel with *attention*, and eyes open, found that he had a much greater business upon his hands, than that to which he had served an apprenticeship; that there were things which belong to man, of much more importance than all that our eyes can see; so glorious, as to deserve all our thoughts; so dangerous, as to need all our care; and so certain, as never to deceive the faithful labourer.

Let it be supposed, that from reading this book, he had discovered that his soul was more to him than his body; that it was better to grow in the virtues of the soul, than to have a large body, or a full purse; that it was better to be fit for heaven, than to have variety of fine houses upon the earth; that it was better to secure an everlasting happiness, than to have plenty of things which he cannot keep; better to live in habits of humility, piety, devotion, charity, and self-denial, than to die unprepared for judgment; better to be most like our Saviour, or some eminent saint, than to excel all the tradesmen in the world, in business and bulk of fortune.

Let it be supposed, that *Negotius* believing these things to be true, entirely devoted himself to God at his first setting out in the world, resolving to pursue his *business* no further than was consistent with great devotion, humility, and self-denial; and for no other ends, but to provide himself with a sober subsistence, and to do all the good that he could, to the souls and bodies of his fellow-creatures.

Let it therefore be supposed, that instead of the continual hurry of business, he was frequent in his retirements, and a strict observer of all the *hours* of prayer; that instead of restless desires after more riches, his soul had been full of the love of God and heavenly affection, constantly watching against worldly tempers, and always aspiring after divine grace; that instead of worldly cares and contrivances, he was busy in fortifying his soul against all approaches of sin; that instead of costly show, and expensive generosity of a splendid life, he loved and exercised all instances of humility and lowliness; that instead of great treats and full tables, his house only furnished a sober refreshment to those that wanted it.

Let it be supposed that his contentment kept him free from all kinds of envy. That his piety made him thankful to God in all crosses and disappointments. That his charity kept him from being rich, by a continual distribution to all objects of compassion.

Now had this been the Christian spirit of *Negotius*, can anyone say, that he had lost the true joy and happiness of life, by thus conforming to the spirit, and living up to the hopes of the Gospel?

Can it be said, that a life made exemplary by such virtues as these, which keep heaven always in our sight, which both delight and exalt the soul here, and prepare it for the presence of God hereafter, must be *poor* and *dull*, if compared to that of heaping up riches, which can neither stay with us, nor we with them?

It would be endless to multiply examples of this kind, to show you how little is lost, and how much is gained, by introducing a strict and exact piety into every condition of human life.

I shall now therefore leave it to your own meditation, to carry this way of thinking further, hoping that you are enough directed by what is here said, to convince yourself, that a true and exalted piety is so far from rendering any life dull and tiresome, that it is the only joy and happiness of every condition in the world.

Imagine to yourself some person in a *consumption*, or any other *lingering distemper*, that was *incurable*.

If you were to see such a man wholly intent upon doing everything in the spirit of Religion, making the wisest use of all his time, fortune, and abilities. If he was for carrying every duty of piety to its greatest height, and striving to have all the advantage that could be had from the remainder of his life. If he avoided all business, but such as was necessary; if he was averse to all the follies and vanities of the world, had no taste for *finery*, and *show*, but sought for all his comfort in the hopes and expectations of Religion; you would certainly commend his prudence, you would say that he had taken the right method to make himself as joyful and happy, as anyone can be in state of such infirmity.

On the other hand, if you should see the same person, with *trembling* hands, *short* breath, *thin* jaws, and *hollow* eyes, wholly intent upon business and bargains, as long as he could speak. If you should see him pleased with *fine clothes*, when he could scarce stand to be dressed, and laying out his money in *horses* and *dogs*, rather than purchase the prayers of the poor for his soul, which was so soon to be separated from his body, you would certainly condemn him, as a weak silly man.

Now as it is easy to see the reasonableness, the wisdom and happiness of a religious spirit in a *consumptive man*, so if you pursue the same way of thinking, you will as easily perceive the same wisdom and happiness of a pious temper, in every other state of life.

For how soon will every man that is in *health*, be in the state of him that is in a *consumption?* How soon will he want all the same comforts and satisfactions of Religion, which every dying man wants?

And if it be wise and happy to live piously, because we have not above a year to live, is it not being more wise, and making ourselves more happy, because we may have more years to come! If one year of piety before we die, is so desirable, is not more years of piety much more desirable?

If a man had *five fixed* years to live, he could not possibly think at all, without intending to make the best use of them *all*. When he saw his stay so short in this world, he must needs think that this was not a world for him; and when he saw how near he was to another world, that was eternal, he must surely think it very necessary, to be very diligent in preparing himself for it.

Now as reasonable as piety appears in such a circumstance of life, it is yet more reasonable in every circumstance of life, to every thinking man.

For who but a madman, can reckon that he has *five* years *certain* to come?

And if it be reasonable and necessary to deny our worldly tempers, and live wholly unto God, because we are *certain* that we are to die at the end of *five years;* surely it must be much more reasonable and necessary, for us to live in the same spirit, because we have no *certainty*, that we shall live *five weeks.*

Again, if we were to add *twenty* years to the *five*, which is in all probability more than will be added to the lives of many people, who are at man's estate; what a poor thing is this! how small a difference is there between five, and twenty-five years?

It is said, that a *day* is with God as a *thousand years*, and a thousand years as one day; because in regard to his eternity, this difference is as nothing.

Now as we are all created to be *eternal*, to live in an endless succession of ages upon ages, where *thousands* and *millions of thousands* of years, will have no proportion to our everlasting life in God; so with regard to this eternal state, which is our real state, twenty-five *years* is as poor a pittance, as twenty-five *days.*

Now we can never make any true judgment of time as it relates to us, without considering the true state of our *duration.* If we are *temporary* beings, then a little time, may justly be called a great deal in relation to us, but if we are *eternal* beings, then the difference of a few years is as nothing.

If we were to suppose *three* different *sorts* of rational beings, all of *different*, but fixed duration, one sort that lived *certainly* only a *month*, the other a *year*, and the third an *hundred* years.

Now if these beings were to meet together, and talk about

time, they must talk in a very different language; *half* an *hour* to those that were to live but a *month*, must be a very different thing, to what it is to those, who are to live an *hundred years*.

As therefore *time* is thus *different* a thing, with regard to the *state* of those who enjoy it, so if we would know what time is with regard to ourselves, we must consider our state.

Now since our eternal state, is as certainly ours, as our present state; since we are as certainly to live for ever, as we now live at all; it is plain, that we cannot judge of the value of any particular time, as to us, but by comparing it to that eternal duration, for which we are created.

If you would know, what *five years* signify to a being that was to live an *hundred*, you must compare *five* to an *hundred*, and see what proportion it bears to it, and then you will judge right.

So if you would know, what *twenty* years signify to a son of *Adam*, you must compare it, not to a *million* of ages, but to an *eternal* duration, to which no number of millions bears any proportion; and then you will judge right, by finding it *nothing*.

Consider therefore this: how would you condemn the folly of a man, that should lose his share of future glory, for the sake of being *rich*, or *great*, or *praised*, or delighted in *any enjoyment*, only *one poor* day before he was to die!

But if the time will come, when a number of years will seem less to everyone, than a day does now; what a condemnation must it then be, if eternal happiness should appear to be lost, for something less than the enjoyment of a day!

Why does a day seem a trifle to us now? It is because we have years to set against it. It is the duration of years, that makes it appear as nothing.

What a *trifle* therefore must the years of a *man's age* appear, when they are forced to be set against *eternity*, when there shall be nothing but eternity to compare them with!

Now this will be the case of every man, as soon as he is out of the body, he will be forced to forget the distinctions of days and years, and to measure time, not by the course of the Sun, but by setting it against eternity.

As the *fixed stars*, by reason of our being placed at such distance from them, appear but so many *points;* so when we, placed in eternity, shall look back upon *all time*, it will all appear but as a *moment*.

Then, a *luxury*, an *indulgence*, a *prosperity*, a *greatness* of *fifty* years, will seem to everyone that looks back upon it, as the same *poor short* enjoyment, as if he had been snatched away in his *first sin*.

These few reflections upon *time*, are only to show how poorly they think, how miserably they judge, who are less careful of an eternal state, because they *may* be at some *years'* distance from it, than they would be, if they knew they were within a few *weeks of it.*

Chapter XIV.

Concerning that part of Devotion which relates to times *and* hours *of* Prayer. *Of daily* early *prayer in the morning. How we are to improve our* forms *of Prayer, and how to increase the* spirit *of devotion.*

HAVING in the foregoing Chapter, shown the necessity of a devout spirit, or habit of mind in every part of our common life, in the discharge of all our business, in the use of all the gifts of God : I come now to consider that part of devotion, which relates to *times* and *hours* of prayer.

I take it for granted, that every Christian, that is in health, is up *early* in the morning ; for it is much more reasonable to suppose a person up *early*, because he is a *Christian*, than because he is a *labourer*, or a *tradesman*, or a *servant*, or has business that wants him.

We naturally conceive some abhorrence of a man that is in *bed*, when he should be at his *labour*, or in his *shop*. We cannot tell how to think anything good of him, who is such a slave to drowsiness, as to neglect his business for it.

Let this therefore teach us to conceive, how odious we must appear in the sight of heaven, if we are in *bed*, shut up in *sleep* and *darkness*, when we should be praising God ; and are such slaves to drowsiness, as to neglect our devotions for it.

For if he is to be blamed as a *slothful drone*, that rather chooses the lazy indulgence of sleep, than to perform his proper share of worldly business ; how much more is he to be reproached, that had rather lie folded up in a bed, than be raising up his heart to God in acts of praise and adoration ?

Prayer is the nearest approach to God, and the highest enjoyment of him, that we are capable of in this life.

It is the noblest exercise of the soul, the most exalted use of our best faculties, and the highest imitation of the blessed inhabitants of heaven.

When our hearts are full of God, sending up holy desires to the throne of grace, we are then in our highest state, we are upon the utmost heights of human greatness; we are not before *kings* and *princes*, but in the presence and audience of the *Lord* of all the world, and can be no higher, till death is swallowed up in glory.

On the other hand, *sleep* is the *poorest, dullest* refreshment of the body, that is so far from being intended as an *enjoyment*, that we are forced to receive it either in a state of *insensibility*, or in the folly of *dreams*.

Sleep is such a *dull, stupid* state of existence, that even amongst *mere animals*, we despise those most, which are most drowsy.

He therefore that chooses, to enlarge the slothful indulgence of sleep, rather than be *early* at his devotions to God, chooses the dullest refreshment of the body, before the highest, noblest employment of the soul; he chooses that state, which is a reproach to mere *animals*, rather than that exercise, which is the glory of *Angels*.

You will perhaps say, though you rise *late*, yet you are always careful of your devotions when you are up.

It may be so. But what then? Is it well done of you to rise late, because you pray when you are up? Is it pardonable to waste great part of the day in bed, because some time after you say your prayers?

It is as much your duty to rise to pray, as to pray when you are risen. And if you are late at your prayers, you offer to God the prayers of an idle, slothful worshipper, that rises to prayers, as idle servants rise to their labour.

Further, if you fancy that you are careful of your devotions, when you are up, though it be your *custom* to rise late, you deceive yourself; for you cannot perform your devotions as you ought. For he that cannot deny himself this drowsy indulgence, but must pass away good part of the morning in it, is no more prepared for prayer when he is up, than he is prepared for *fasting, abstinence*, or any other *self-denial*. He may indeed more easily read over a *form* of prayer, than he can perform these duties; but he is no more disposed to enter into the *true spirit* of prayer, than he is disposed to *fasting*. For sleep thus indulged, gives a *softness* and *idleness* to all our tempers, and makes us unable to relish anything, but what suits with an *idle state* of mind, and gratifies our natural tempers, as sleep does. So that a person that is a slave to this idleness, is in the *same temper*

when he is up; and though he is not asleep, yet he is under the effects of it; and everything that is *idle*, *indulgent*, or *sensual*, pleases him for the same reason that sleep pleases him; and on the other hand, everything that requires *care*, or *trouble*, or *self-denial*, is hateful to him, for the same reason that he hates to rise. He that places any happiness in this morning indulgence, would be glad to have all the day made happy in the same manner; though not with sleep, yet with *such enjoyments*, as gratify and indulge the body in the same manner as sleep does; or at least, with such as come as near to it as they can. The remembrance of a warm bed is in his mind all the day, and he is glad when he is not one of those, that sit starving in a *Church*.

Now you do not imagine, that such a one can truly mortify that body which he thus indulges; yet you might as well think this, as that he can truly perform his devotions; or live in such a drowsy state of indulgence, and yet relish the joys of a *spiritual life*.

For surely, no one will pretend to say, that he knows and feels the true happiness of prayer, who does not think it worth his while to be *early* at it.

It is not possible in nature, for an *Epicure* to be truly devout; he must renounce this habit of sensuality, before he can relish the happiness of devotion.

Now he that turns sleep into an *idle indulgence*, does as much to corrupt and disorder his soul, to make it a slave to bodily appetites, and keep it incapable of all devout and heavenly tempers, as he that turns the necessities of eating, into a course of indulgence.

A person that eats and drinks too much, does not feel such effects from it, as those do, who live in *notorious* instances of gluttony and intemperance; but yet his course of indulgence, though it be not *scandalous* in the eyes of the world, nor such as *torments* his own conscience, is a great and constant hindrance to his improvement in virtue; it gives him 'eyes that see not,' and 'ears that hear not'; it creates a sensuality in the soul, increases the power of bodily passions, and makes him incapable of entering into the true spirit of Religion.

Now this is the case of those who waste their time in *sleep*; it does not *disorder* their lives, or *wound* their consciences, as *notorious acts* of intemperance do; but like any other more moderate course of indulgence, it silently, and by smaller degrees, wears away the spirit of religion, and sinks the soul into a state of dulness and sensuality.

If you consider devotion only as a time of so much prayer, you may perhaps perform it, though you live in this daily indul-

gence: But if you consider it as a *state* of the heart, as a *lively fervour* of the soul, that is deeply affected with a sense of its own misery and infirmities, and desiring the spirit of God more than all things in the world, you will find that the spirit of indulgence, and the spirit of prayer, cannot subsist together. Mortification, of *all kinds*, is the very life and soul of piety; but he that has not so small a degree of it, as to be able to be early at his prayers, can have no reason to think that he has taken up his cross, and is following Christ.

What conquest has he got over himself? What right hand has he cut off? What trials is he prepared for? What sacrifice is he ready to offer unto God; who cannot be so cruel to himself, as to rise to prayer at such time, as the drudging part of the world are content to rise to their labour.

Some people will not scruple to tell you, that they indulge themselves in sleep, because they have *nothing* to do; and that if they had either *business*, or *pleasure* to rise to, they would not lose so much of their time in sleep. But such people must be told, that they mistake the matter; that they have a great deal of business to do; they have a *hardened heart* to change; they have the *whole spirit* of Religion to get. For surely, he that thinks devotion to be of less moment, than business or pleasure; or that he has nothing to do, because nothing but his prayers want him, may be justly said to have the whole spirit of Religion to seek.

You must not therefore consider, how small a crime it is to *rise late*, but you must consider how great a misery it is, to want the *spirit* of Religion, to have a heart not rightly affected with prayer; and to live in such softness and idleness, as makes you incapable of the most fundamental duties, of a truly Christian and spiritual life.

This is the right way of judging, of the crime of wasting great part of your time in bed.

You must not consider the thing barely in itself, but what it proceeds from; what virtues it shows to be wanting; what vices it naturally strengthens. For every habit of this kind, discovers the *state* of the soul, and plainly shows the *whole turn* of your mind.

If our blessed Lord used to pray early before day; if he spent whole nights in prayer; if the devout *Anna* was day and night in the temple; if St. *Paul* and *Silas* at midnight sang praises unto God; if the *primitive Christians*, for several hundred years, besides their hours of prayer in the day-time, met publicly in the Churches at *midnight*, to join in Psalms and Prayers, is it not certain that these practices showed the *state* of their

heart? Are they not so many plain proofs of the *whole turn* of their minds?

And if you live in a contrary state, wasting great part of every day in sleep, thinking any time soon enough to be at your prayers; is it not equally certain, that this practice as much shows the state of your heart, and the whole turn of your mind?

So that if this indulgence is your way of life, you have as much reason to believe yourself destitute of the true spirit of devotion, as you have, to believe the Apostles and Saints of the Primitive Church were truly devout. For as their way of life was a demonstration of their devotion, so a contrary way of life, is as strong a proof of a want of devotion.

When you read the Scriptures, you see a Religion that is all *life*, and *spirit*, and *joy* in God; that supposes our souls risen from earthly desires, and bodily indulgences, to prepare for another body, another world, and other enjoyments. You see Christians represented as temples of the Holy Ghost, as children of the day, as candidates for an eternal crown, as watchful virgins, that have their lamps always burning, in expectation of the bridegroom. But can he be thought to have this joy in God, this care of eternity, this watchful spirit, who has not zeal enough to rise to his prayers?

When you look into the writings and lives of the first Christians, you see the same spirit that you see in the Scriptures. All is reality, life and action. Watching and prayers, self-denial and mortification, was the common business of their lives.

From that time to this, there has been no person like them, eminent for piety, who has not, like them, been eminent for self-denial and mortification. This is the only royal way that leads to a kingdom.

But how far are you from this way of life, or rather how contrary to it, if instead of imitating their austerity and mortification, you cannot so much as renounce so poor an indulgence, as to be able to rise to your prayers? If self-denials and bodily sufferings, if watchings and fastings, will be marks of glory at the day of Judgment, where must we hide our heads, that have slumbered away our time in sloth and softness?

You perhaps may find some pretences, to excuse yourselves from that severity of fasting and self-denial, which the first Christians practised. You fancy that human nature is grown weaker, and that the difference of *Climates*, may make it not possible for you to observe their methods of self-denial and austerity, in these colder countries.

But all this is but pretence; for the change is not in the *outward* state of things, but in the *inward* state of our minds. When

there is the same spirit in us, that there was in the Apostles and primitive Christians, when we feel the weight of Religion, as they did, when we have their faith and hope, we shall take up our cross, and deny ourselves, and live in such methods of mortification as they did.

Had St. *Paul* lived in a cold country, had he had a constitution made weak with a *sickly stomach*, and often *infirmities*, he would have done as he advised *Timothy*, he would have mixed a little wine with his water.

But still he would have lived in a state of self-denial and mortification. He would have given this same account of himself: 'I therefore so run, not as uncertainly, so fight I, not as one 'that beateth the air: But I keep under my body, and bring it unto 'subjection, lest that by any means, when I have preached to 'others, I myself should be a castaway.'

After all, let it now be supposed, that you imagine there is no necessity for you to be so sober and vigilant, so fearful of yourself, so watchful over your passions, so apprehensive of danger, so careful of your salvation, as the *Apostles* were. Let it be supposed, that you imagine that you want less self-denial and mortification, to subdue your bodies, and purify your souls, than they wanted; that you need not have your loins girt, and your lamps burning as they had, will you therefore live in a quite contrary state? Will you make your life as constant a course of softness and indulgence, as theirs was of strictness and self-denial.

If therefore, you should think that you have time sufficient, both for prayer and other duties, though you rise late; yet let me persuade you to rise early, as an instance of *self-denial.* It is so small a one, that if you cannot comply with it, you have no reason to think yourself capable of any other.

If I were to desire you, not to study the gratifications of your *palate*, in the niceties of meats and drinks, I would not insist much upon the crime of wasting your money in such a way, though it be a great one; but I would desire you to renounce such a way of life, because it supports you in such a state of sensuality and indulgence, as renders you incapable of relishing the most essential doctrines of Religion.

For the same reason, I do not insist much on the crime of wasting so much of your time in sleep, though it be a great one, but I desire you to renounce this indulgence, because it gives a softness and idleness to your soul; and is so contrary to that *lively, zealous, watchful, self-denying* spirit, which was not only the spirit of Christ and his Apostles, the spirit of all the saints and martyrs which have ever been amongst men, but must be the

spirit of all those, who would not sink in the common corruption of the world.

Here therefore, we must fix our charge against this practice; we must blame it, not as having this or that particular evil, but as a *general habit*, that extends itself through our whole spirit, and supports a state of mind that is wholly wrong.

It is contrary to piety; not as accidental slips and mistakes in life are contrary to it, but in such a manner, as an ill habit of body is contrary to health.

On the other hand, if you were to rise early every morning, as as instance of self-denial, as a method of renouncing indulgence, as a means of redeeming your time, and fitting your spirit for prayer, you would find mighty advantages from it. This method, though it seems such a small circumstance of life, would in all probability be a means of great piety. It would keep it constantly in your head, that softness and idleness were to be avoided, that self-denial was a part of Christianity. It would teach you to exercise power over yourself, and make you able by degrees to renounce other pleasures and tempers that war against the soul.

This one rule would teach you to think of others; it would dispose your mind to exactness, and be very likely to bring the remaining part of the day, under rules of prudence and devotion.

But above all, one certain benefit from this method you will be sure of having, it will best fit and prepare you for the reception of the Holy Spirit. When you thus begin the day in the spirit of religion, renouncing sleep, because you are to renounce softness, and redeem your time; this disposition, as it puts your heart into a good state, so it will procure the assistance of the Holy Spirit; what is so planted and watered, will certainly have an increase from God. You will then speak from your heart, your soul will be awake, your prayers will refresh you like meat and drink, you will feel what you say, and begin to know what saints and holy men have meant, by fervours of devotion.

He that is thus prepared for prayer, who rises with these dispositions, is in a very different state from him, who has no rules of this kind; who rises by chance, as he happens to be weary of his bed, or is able to sleep no longer. If such a one prays only with his mouth; if his heart feels nothing of that which he says; if his prayers are only things of course; if they are a lifeless form of words, which he only repeats because they are soon said, there is nothing to be wondered at in all this; for such dispositions are the natural effects of such a state of life.

Hoping therefore, that you are now enough convinced of the

necessity of rising early to your prayers, I shall proceed to lay before you a method of daily prayer.

I do not take upon me to prescribe to you the use of any *particular forms* of prayer, but only to show you the necessity of praying at such times, and in such a manner.

You will here find some helps, how to furnish yourself with such *forms* of prayer, as shall be useful to you. And if you are such a proficient in the spirit of devotion, that your heart is always ready to pray in its own language, in this case I press no necessity of borrowed forms.

For though I think a form of prayer very *necessary* and *expedient* for *public* worship, yet if anyone can find a better way of raising his heart unto God in private, than by *prepared forms* of prayer, I have nothing to object against it; my design being only to assist and direct such as stand in need of assistance.

Thus much, I believe, is certain, that the *generality* of Christians ought to use *forms* of prayer, at all the regular times of prayer. It seems right for everyone to begin with a *form* of prayer; and if in the midst of his devotions, he finds his heart ready to break forth into new and higher strains of devotion, he should leave his *form* for a while, and follow those fervours of his heart, till it again wants the assistance of his usual petitions.

This seems to be the *true liberty* of *private* devotion; it should be under the direction of some *form;* but not so tied down to it, but that it may be free to take such new expressions, as its present fervours happen to furnish it with; which sometimes are more affecting, and carry the soul more powerfully to God, than any expressions that were ever used before.

All people that have ever made any reflections upon what passes in their own hearts, must know that they are mighty changeable in regard to devotion. Sometimes our hearts are so *awakened*, have such *strong* apprehensions of the divine Presence, are so full of *deep* compunction for our sins, that we cannot confess them in any language, but that of *tears*.

Sometimes the light of God's countenance shines so bright upon us, we see so far into the invisible world, we are so affected with the wonders of the love and goodness of God, that our hearts worship and adore in a language higher than that of words, and we feel transports of devotion, which only can be felt.

On the other hand, sometimes we are so *sunk* into our bodies, so *dull* and *unaffected* with that which concerns our souls, that our hearts are as much too low for our prayers; we cannot keep pace with our *forms* of confession, or feel half of that in our hearts which we have in our mouths; we thank and praise God

with forms of words, but our hearts have little or no share in them.

It is therefore highly necessary, to provide against this *inconstancy* of our hearts, by having at hand such *forms* of prayer, as may best suit us when our hearts are in their *best* state, and also be most likely to raise and stir them up, when they are *sunk* into *dulness*. For as words have a power of affecting our hearts on all occasions, as the same thing differently expressed has different effects upon our minds; so it is reasonable, that we should make this advantage of language, and provide ourselves with such forms of expressions, as are most likely to move and enliven our souls, and fill them with sentiments suitable to them.

The first thing that you are to do, when you are upon your *knees*, is to shut your *eyes*, and with a short *silence* let your soul place itself in the presence of God; that is, you are to use this, or some other better method, to separate yourself from all common thoughts, and make your heart as sensible as you can of the divine presence.

Now if this recollection of spirit is necessary, as who can say it is not? then how poorly must they perform their devotions, who are always in a *hurry;* who begin them in haste, and hardly allow themselves time to repeat their very *form*, with any gravity or attention? Theirs is properly *saying* prayers, instead of *praying*.

To proceed; if you were to use yourself (as far as you can) to pray always in the *same* place; if you were to reserve that place for devotion, and not allow yourself to do anything common in it; if you were never to be there yourself, but in times of devotion; if any *little room*, (or if that cannot be) if any particular *part* of a room was thus used, this kind of consecration of it, as a place *holy* unto God, would have an effect upon your mind, and dispose you to such tempers, as would very much assist your devotion. For by having a place thus sacred in your *room*, it would in some measure resemble a *chapel* or *house* of God. This would dispose you to be always in the spirit of religion, when you were there; and fill you with *wise* and *holy* thoughts, when you were by yourself. Your own apartment would raise in your mind, such sentiments as you have, when you stand near an *altar;* and you would be afraid of thinking or doing anything that was *foolish* near that place, which is the place of prayer, and holy intercourse with God.

When you begin your petitions, use such various expressions of the attributes of God, as may make you most sensible of the greatness and power of the divine Nature.

Begin therefore in words like these: 'O Being of all beings, 'Fountain of all light and glory, gracious Father of men and 'angels, whose universal Spirit is everywhere present, giving life, 'and light, and joy, to all angels in heaven, and all creatures 'upon earth,' *&c.*

For these representations of the divine Attributes, which show us in some degree the majesty and greatness of God, are an excellent means of raising our hearts, into lively acts of worship and adoration.

What is the reason, that most people are so much affected with this petition in the *Burial Service* of our Church: 'Yet, O 'Lord God most holy, O Lord most mighty, O holy and most 'merciful Saviour, deliver us not into the bitter pains of eternal 'death'? It is, because the joining together so many *great expressions*, gives such a description of the greatness of the Divine Majesty, as naturally affects every sensible mind.

Although therefore prayer does not consist in *fine words*, or *studied expressions;* yet as words speak to the soul, as they have a certain power of raising thoughts in the soul; so those words which speak of God in the *highest* manner, which most *fully* express the power and presence of God, which raise thoughts in the soul most suitable to the greatness and providence of God, are the most useful, and most edifying in our prayers.

When you direct any of your petitions to our blessed Lord, let it be in some expressions of this kind: 'O Saviour of the 'world, God of God, Light of Light; thou that art the Bright-'ness of thy Father's Glory, and the express Image of his 'Person; thou that art the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning 'and End of all things; thou that hast destroyed the power of 'the devil, that hast overcome death; thou that art entered into 'the Holy of Holies, that sittest at the right hand of the Father, 'that art high above all thrones and principalities, that makest 'intercession for all the world; thou that art the judge of the 'quick and dead; thou that wilt speedily come down in thy 'Father's glory, to reward all men according to their works, be 'thou my light and my peace,' *&c.*

For such representations, which describe so many *characters* of our Saviour's nature and power, are not only proper acts of *adoration*, but will, if they are repeated with any attention, fill our hearts with the highest fervours of true devotion.

Again, if you ask any particular grace of our blessed Lord, let it be in some manner like this:

'O holy Jesus, Son of the most high God, thou that wert 'scourged at a pillar, stretched and nailed upon a cross, for the 'sins of the world, unite me to thy cross, and fill my soul with

'thy holy, humble, and suffering spirit. O Fountain of mercy, 'thou that didst save the thief upon the cross, save me from the 'guilt of a sinful life; thou that didst cast seven devils out of 'Mary Magdalene, cast out of my heart all evil thoughts, and 'wicked tempers. O Giver of life, thou that didst raise Lazarus 'from the dead, raise up my soul from the death and darkness of 'sin. Thou that didst give to thy Apostles power over unclean 'spirits, give me power over my own heart. Thou that didst 'appear unto thy disciples when the doors were shut, do thou 'appear unto me in the secret apartment of my heart. Thou 'that didst cleanse the lepers, heal the sick, and give sight to 'the blind, cleanse my heart, heal the disorders of my soul, and 'fill me with heavenly light.'

Now these kinds of appeals have a double advantage; first, as they are so many proper acts of our *faith*, whereby we not only show our belief of the *miracles* of Christ, but turn them at the same time into so many instances of worship and adoration.

Secondly, As they strengthen and increase the faith of our prayers, by presenting to our minds so many instances of that *power* and *goodness*, which we call upon for our own assistance.

For he that appeals to Christ, as casting out *devils*, and raising the *dead*, has then a powerful motive in his mind to pray earnestly, and depend faithfully upon his assistance.

Again; in order to fill your prayers with excellent strains of devotion, it may be of use to you to observe this further rule:

When at any time either in reading the *Scripture*, or any book of *Piety*, you meet with a passage, that more than ordinarily affects your mind, and seems as it were to give your heart a new motion towards God, you should try to turn it into the *form* of a petition, and then give it a place in your prayers. By this means, you would be often improving your prayers, and storing yourself with proper forms, of making the desires of your heart known unto God.

At all the *stated hours* of prayer, it will be of great benefit to you, to have something *fixed*, and something at *liberty*, in your devotions.

You should have some *fixed* subject, which is constantly to be the chief matter of your prayer at that particular time; and yet have liberty to add such *other petitions*, as your condition may then require.

For instance; As the *morning* is to you the beginning of a new life; as God has then given you a new enjoyment of yourself, and a fresh entrance into the world, it is highly proper, that your *first* devotions should be a *praise* and thanksgiving to God, as for a new creation; and that you should offer and devote

body and *soul*, all that you *are*, and all that you *have*, to his service and glory.

Receive therefore every day, as a *resurrection* from death, as a new enjoyment of life; meet every *rising sun* with such sentiments of God's goodness, as if you had seen *it*, and all things *new created* upon your account; and under the sense of so great a blessing, let your joyful heart praise and magnify so good and glorious a Creator.

Let therefore *praise* and *thanksgiving*, and *oblation* of yourself unto God, be always the *fixed* and *certain* subject of your *first* prayers in the morning; and then take the liberty of adding such other devotions, as the *accidental* difference of your *state*, or the *accidental* difference of your *heart*, shall then make most needful and expedient for you.

For one of the greatest benefits of *private* devotion, consists in rightly adapting our prayers to these two conditions, the difference of our *state*, and the difference of our *hearts*.

By the difference of our *state*, is meant the difference of our *external state* or condition, as of *sickness, health, pains, losses, disappointments, troubles*, particular *mercies*, or *judgments* from God; all sorts of *kindnesses, injuries* or *reproaches* from other people.

Now as these are great parts of our state of life, as they make great difference in it, by continually changing; so our devotion will be made doubly beneficial to us, when it watches to receive and sanctify all these *changes* of our state, and turns them all into so many occasions, of a more particular application to God, of such thanksgivings, such resignation, such petitions, as our present state more especially requires.

And he that makes every change in his state, a reason of presenting unto God some particular petitions suitable to that change, will soon find, that he has taken an excellent means, not only of *praying* with fervour, but of *living* as he prays.

The next condition, to which we are always to adapt some part of our prayers, is the *difference* of our *hearts;* by which is meant the different state of the tempers of our hearts, as of *love, joy, peace, tranquillity; dulness* and *dryness* of *spirit, anxiety, discontent, motions* of *envy* and *ambition, dark* and *disconsolate thoughts, resentments, fretfulness*, and *peevish tempers*.

Now as these tempers, through the weakness of our nature, will have their succession more or less, even in pious minds; so we should constantly make the *present state* of our heart, the reason of some particular application to God.

If we are in the delightful calm of sweet and easy passions, of *love* and *joy* in God, we should then offer the grateful tribute of

thanksgiving to God, for the possession of so much happiness, thankfully owning and acknowledging him as the bountiful Giver of it all.

If, on the other hand, we feel ourselves laden with *heavy* passions, with *dulness* of spirit, *anxiety* and *uneasiness*, we must then look up to God in acts of humility, confessing our unworthiness, opening our troubles to him, beseeching him in his good time to lessen the weight of our infirmities, and to deliver us from such passions as oppose the purity and perfection of our souls.

Now by thus watching, and attending to the present state of our hearts, and suiting some of our petitions exactly to their wants, we shall not only be well acquainted with the disorders of our souls, but also be well exercised in the method of curing them.

By this prudent and wise application of our prayers, we shall get all the relief from them that is possible; and the very *changeableness* of our hearts, will prove a means of exercising a greater variety of holy tempers.

Now by all that has here been said, you will easily perceive, that persons careful of the greatest benefit of prayer, ought to have a great share in the forming and composing their own devotions.

As to that part of their prayers, which is always fixed to one certain subject, in that they may use the help of forms composed by other persons; but in that part of their prayers, which they are always to suit to the present *state* of their *life*, and the *present* state of their *heart*, there they must let the sense of their own condition help them to such kinds of *petition*, *thanksgiving*, or *resignation*, as their present state more especially requires.

Happy are they, who have this business and employment upon their hands!

And now, if people of leisure, whether men, or women, who are so much at a loss how to dispose of their time, who are forced into poor contrivances, idle visits, and ridiculous diversions, merely to get rid of hours that hang heavily upon their hands; if such were to appoint some certain spaces of their time, to the study of devotion, searching after all the means and helps to attain a devout spirit; if they were to collect the best *forms* of devotion, to use themselves to transcribe the finest passages of *scripture-prayers;* if they were to collect the devotions, confessions, petitions, praises, resignations, and thanksgivings, which are scattered up and down in the Psalms, and range them under proper heads, as so much proper fuel for the flame of their own devotion; if their minds were often thus employed, sometimes

meditating upon them, sometimes getting them by heart, and making them as habitual as their own thoughts, how fervently would they pray, who came thus prepared to prayer?

And how much better would it be, to make this benefit of *leisure-time*, than to be *dully* and *idly* lost in the poor impertinences of a *playing, visiting, wandering* life?

How much better would it be, to be thus furnished with hymns and anthems of the saints, and teach their souls to ascend to God, than to *corrupt, bewilder*, and *confound their* hearts, with the *wild fancies*, the *lustful* thoughts of a lewd Poet?

Now though people of leisure seem called more particularly to this study of devotion, yet persons of much business or labour, must not think themselves excused from this, or some better method of improving their devotion.

For the greater their business is, the more need they have of some such method as this, to prevent its power over their hearts; to secure them from sinking into worldly tempers, and preserve a sense and taste of heavenly things in their minds. And a little time *regularly* and *constantly* employed to any one *use* or *end*, will do great things, and produce mighty effects.

And it is for want of considering devotion in this *light*, as something that is to be nursed and cherished with care, as something that is to be made part of our business, that is to be improved with care and contrivance, by art and method, and a diligent use of the best helps; it is for want of considering it in this light, that so many people are so little benefited by it, and live and die strangers to that spirit of devotion, which by a prudent use of proper means, they might have enjoyed in a high degree.

For though the spirit of devotion is the gift of God, and not attainable by any *mere* power of our own, yet it is mostly given, and *never withheld*, from those, who by a wise and diligent use of proper means, prepare themselves for the reception of it.

And it is amazing to see, how eagerly men employ their *parts*, their *sagacity, time, study, application* and *exercise;* how all helps are called to their assistance, when anything is intended and desired in worldly matters; and how *dull, negligent*, and unimproved they are, how little they use their *parts, sagacity*, and abilities, to raise and increase their devotion!

Mundanus is a man of excellent parts, and clear apprehension. He is well advanced in age, and has made a great figure in business. Every part of *trade* and business that has fallen in his way, has had some improvement from him; and he is always contriving to carry every method of doing anything

well, to its greatest height. *Mundanus* aims at the greatest perfection in everything. The *soundness* and *strength* of his mind, and his just way of thinking upon things, makes him intent upon removing all imperfections.

He can tell you all the defects and errors in all the common methods, whether of *trade, building*, or improving *land*, or *manufactures*. The clearness and strength of his understanding, which he is constantly improving, by continual exercise in these matters, by often digesting his thoughts in writing, and trying everything every way, has rendered him a great master of most concerns in human life.

Thus has *Mundanus* gone on, increasing his *knowledge* and *judgment*, as fast as his years came upon him.

The one only thing which has not fallen under his improvement, nor received any benefit from his judicious mind, is his *devotion:* This is just in the same *poor* state it was, when he was only six years of age, and the *old man* prays now, in that little form of words, which his mother used to hear him repeat night and morning.

This *Mundanus*, that hardly ever saw the poorest *utensil*, or ever took the meanest *trifle* into his hand, without considering how it might be *made*, or *used* to better advantage, has gone all his life long praying in the same manner, as when he was a *child;* without ever considering how much *better* or *oftener* he might pray; without considering how improvable the spirit of devotion is, how many helps a wise and reasonable man may call to his assistance, and how necessary it is, that our prayers should be enlarged, varied and suited to the particular state and condition of our lives.

If *Mundanus* sees a book of *devotion*, he passes it by, as he does a *spelling-book*, because he remembers that he learned to *pray*, so many years ago under his *mother*, when he learned to *spell*.

Now how poor and pitiable is the conduct of this man of sense, who has so much judgment and understanding in everything, but that which is the *whole wisdom* of man?

And how miserably do many people, more or less, imitate this conduct?

All which seems to be owing to a strange infatuated state of negligence, which keeps people from considering what *devotion* is. For if they did but once proceed so far, as to *reflect* about it, or ask themselves any questions concerning it, they would soon see, that the spirit of *devotion* was like any other *sense* or *understanding*, that is only to be improved by *study*, *care*, *application*, and the *use* of such *means* and *helps*, as are necessary to make a man a proficient in any art or science.

Classicus is a man of learning and well versed in all the best authors of antiquity. He has read them so much, that he has entered into their spirit, and can very ingeniously imitate the manner of any of them. All their thoughts are his thoughts, and he can express himself in their language. He is so great a friend to this improvement of the mind, that if he lights on a young scholar, he never fails to advise him concerning his studies.

Classicus tells this young man, he must not think that he has done enough, when he has only learned *languages;* but that he must be daily conversant with the best authors, read them again and again, catch their spirit by living with them, and that there is no other way of becoming like them, or of making himself a man of *taste* and *judgment*.

How wise might *Classicus* have been, and how much good might he have done in the world, if he had but thought as *justly* of *devotion*, as he does of *learning?*

He never, indeed, says anything *shocking* or *offensive* about *devotion*, because he never *thinks*, or *talks* about it. It suffers nothing from him, but neglect and disregard.

The two Testaments would not have had so much as a place amongst his Books, but that they are both to be had in *Greek*.

Classicus thinks that he sufficiently shows his regard for the Holy Scripture, when he tells you, that he has no other Books of piety besides them.

It is very well, *Classicus*, that you prefer the Bible to all other Books of piety; he has no judgment, that is not thus far of your opinion.

But if you will have no other book of piety besides the *Bible*, because it is the best, How comes it, *Classicus*, that you do not content yourself with *one* of the *best* Books amongst the *Greeks* and *Romans?* How comes it that you are so greedy and eager after *all* of them? How comes it that you think the knowledge of one is a necessary help to the knowledge of the other? How comes it that you are so earnest, so laborious, so expensive of your time and money, to restore *broken periods*, and *scraps* of the ancients?

How comes it that you read so many *Commentators* upon *Cicero*, *Horace*, and *Homer*, and not one upon the Gospel? How comes it that your love of *Cicero*, and *Ovid*, makes you love to read an *author* that writes like them; and yet your *esteem* for the *Gospel* gives you no desire, nay, prevents your reading such Books, as breathe the very spirit of the Gospel?

How comes it that you tell your *young scholar*, he must not content himself with barely understanding his authors, but must

be continually reading them *all*, as the only means of entering into their spirit, and forming his own judgment according to them ?

Why then must the Bible lie alone in your study ? Is not the spirit of the saints, the piety of the holy followers of Jesus Christ, as good and necessary a means of entering into the spirit and *taste* of the Gospel, as the reading of the ancients is of entering into the spirit of antiquity ?

Is the spirit of poetry only to be got by much reading of Poets and Orators ? And is not the spirit of devotion to be got in the same way, by frequently reading the holy thoughts, and pious strains of devout men ?

Is your young Poet to search after *every line*, that may give new wings to his fancy, or direct his imagination ? And is it not as reasonable for him, who desires to improve in the divine life, that is, in the love of heavenly things, to search after every strain of devotion, that may move, kindle, and inflame the holy ardour of his soul ?

Do you advise your *Orator* to translate the best Orations, to commit much of them to memory, to be frequently exercising his talent in this manner, that habits of thinking and speaking justly may be formed in his mind ? And is there not the same benefit and advantage to be made by books of devotion ? Should not a man use them in the same way, that habits of devotion, and aspiring to God in holy thoughts, may be well formed in his soul ?

Now the reason why *Classicus* does not *think* and judge thus reasonably of devotion, is owing to his never thinking of it in any other manner, than as the repeating a *form* of *words*. It never in his life entered into his head, to think of devotion as a *state of the heart*, as an *improvable talent* of the mind, as a *temper* that is to *grow* and *increase* like our *reason* and *judgment*, and to be formed in us by such a regular diligent use of proper means, as are necessary to form any other wise habit of mind.

And it is for want of this, that he has been content all his life, with the *bare letter* of Prayer, and eagerly bent upon entering into the *spirit* of *heathen poets* and *orators*.

And it is much to be lamented, that numbers of *scholars* are *more* or *less* chargeable with this excessive folly ; so negligent of improving their devotion, and so desirous of other poor accomplishments, as if they thought it a nobler talent, to be able to write an *epigram* in the *turn* of *Martial*, than to *live*, and *think*, and *pray* to God, in the spirit of St. *Austin*.

And yet, to correct this temper, and fill a man with a quite contrary spirit, there seems to be no more required, than the *bare* belief of the truth of Christianity.

And if you were to ask *Mundanus*, and *Classicus*, or any man of business, or learning, whether *piety* is not the highest perfection of man, or *devotion* the greatest attainment in the world, they must both be forced to answer in the affirmative, or else give up the truth of the Gospel.

For to set any accomplishment against devotion, or to think anything, or all things in the world, can bear any proportion to its excellency ; is the same absurdity in a Christian, as it would be in a *Philosopher* to prefer a *meal's meat*, to the greatest improvement in knowledge.

For as *Philosophy* professes purely the search and enquiry after knowledge, so *Christianity* supposes, intends, desires, and aims at nothing else, but the raising fallen man to a divine life, to such habits of holiness, such degrees of devotion, as may fit him to enter among the holy inhabitants of the kingdom of heaven.

He that does not believe this of Christianity, may be reckoned an infidel; and he that believes thus much, has *faith* enough to give him a right *judgment* of the *value* of things, to support him in a *sound mind*, and enable him to conquer all the temptations which the world shall lay in his way.

To conclude this Chapter, Devotion is nothing else but *right apprehensions* and *right affections* towards God.

All practices therefore that heighten and improve our true apprehensions of God, all ways of life that tend to *nourish*, *raise*, and fix our affections upon him, are to be reckoned so many helps and means to fill us with devotion.

As *Prayer* is the proper fuel of this holy flame, so we must use all our care and contrivance to give prayer its full power ; as by *alms*, *self-denial*, frequent *retirements*, and *holy readings*, composing *forms* for ourselves, or using the *best* we can get, adding *length* of time, and observing *hours* of Prayer ; *changing*, *improving*, and *suiting* our devotions to the condition of our lives, and the state of our hearts.

Those who have most leisure, seem more especially called to a more eminent observance of these holy rules of a devout life. And they who by the necessity of their state, and not through their own choice, have but little time to employ thus, must make the best use of that little they have.

For this is the certain way of making devotion produce a devout life.

Chapter XV.

Of chanting, or singing of Psalms in our private devotions. Of the excellency and benefit of this kind of devotion. Of the great effects it hath upon our hearts. Of the means of performing it in the best manner.

YOU have seen in the foregoing Chapter, what means and methods you are to use, to raise and improve your devotion. How *early* you are to begin your prayers, and what is to be the *subject* of your *first devotions* in the morning.

There is one thing still remaining, that you must be required to observe, not only as fit and proper to be done, but as such as cannot be neglected, without great prejudice to your devotions. And that is, to begin all your Prayers with a *Psalm*.

This is so right, is so beneficial to devotion, has so much *effect* upon our hearts, that it may be insisted upon as a *common* rule for all persons.

I do not mean, that you should *read* over a Psalm, but that you should *chant* or *sing* one of those Psalms, which we commonly call the *reading Psalms*. For *singing* is as much the *proper* use of a *Psalm*, as *devout supplication* is the *proper* use of a *form* of Prayer. And a Psalm only *read*, is very much like a Prayer that is only *looked* over.

Now the method of *chanting* a Psalm, such as is used in the Colleges in the *Universities*, and in some *Churches*, is such as all Persons are capable of. The change of the voice in thus *chanting* of a Psalm is so small and natural, that everybody is able to do it, and yet sufficient to raise and keep up the gladness of our hearts.

You are therefore to consider this *chanting* of a Psalm, as a necessary beginning of your devotions, as something that is to *awaken* all that is *good* and *holy* within you, that is to call your *spirits* to their proper duty, to set you in your best *posture* towards heaven, and tune all the powers of your soul to worship and adoration.

For there is nothing that so clears a way for your prayers,

nothing that so disperses *dulness* of heart, nothing that so purifies the soul from *poor* and *little* passions, nothing that so *opens* heaven, or carries your heart so near it, as these *songs* of *praise.*

They create a sense and delight in God, they awaken holy desires, they teach you how to ask, and they prevail with God to give. They kindle an *holy* flame, they turn your heart into an *altar*, your prayers into *incense*, and carry them as a sweet-smelling savour to the throne of Grace.

The difference between singing and reading a Psalm, will easily be understood, if you consider the difference between reading and singing a *common song* that you like. Whilst you only read it, you only *like* it, and that is all ; but as soon as you sing it, then you enjoy it, you feel the delight of it, it has got hold of you, your passions keep pace with it, and you feel the *same spirit* within you, that seems to be in the words.

If you were to tell a person that has such a song, that he need not *sing* it, that it was sufficient to *peruse* it, he would wonder what you mean ; and would think you as absurd, as if you were to tell him, that he should only *look* at his *food*, to see whether it was good, but need not *eat* it : For a song of praise not sung, is very like any other good thing not made *use* of.

You will perhaps say, that singing is a *particular talent*, that belongs only to particular people, and that you have neither *voice* nor *ear* to make any music.

If you had said that singing is a *general talent*, and that people differ in that as they do in all other things, you had said something much truer.

For how vastly do people differ in the talent of *thinking*, which is not only common to all men, but seems to be the very essence of human nature ? How readily do some people reason upon everything ? and how hardly do others reason upon anything ? How clearly do some people discourse upon the most abstruse matters ? and how confusedly do others talk upon the plainest subjects ?

Yet no one desires to be excused from *thought*, or *reason*, or *discourse*, because he has not these *talents*, as some people have them. But it is full as just, for a person to think himself excused from *thinking* upon God, from *reasoning* about his duty to him, or *discoursing* about the means of salvation, because he has not these talents in any *fine degree ;* this is full as just, as for a person to think himself excused from singing the praises of God, because he has not a fine *ear*, or a musical *voice.*

For as it is *speaking*, and not *graceful* speaking, that is a required part of prayer ; as it is *bowing*, and not *genteel* bowing,

that is a proper part of adoration; so it is *singing*, and not *artful* fine singing, that is a required way of praising God.

If a person were to forbear praying, because he had an *odd tone* in his voice, he would have as good an excuse as he has, that forbears from *singing* Psalms, because he has but little management of his voice. And as a man's speaking his prayers, though in an odd tone, may yet sufficiently answer all the ends of his own devotion; so a man's singing of a Psalm, though not in a very musical way, may yet sufficiently answer all the ends of rejoicing in, and praising God.

Secondly, This objection might be of some weight, if you were desired to sing, to entertain other people; but is not to be admitted in the present case; where you are only required to sing the praises of God, as a part of your private devotion.

If a person that had a very ill voice, and a bad way of speaking, were desired to be the mouth of a congregation, it would be a very proper excuse for him, to say that he had not a voice, or a way of speaking that was proper for prayer. But he would be very absurd, if for the same reason he should neglect his own private devotions.

Now this is exactly the case of singing Psalms; you may not have the talent of singing, so as to be able to entertain other people, and therefore it is reasonable to excuse yourself from it; but if for that reason you should excuse yourself from this way of praising God, you would be guilty of a great absurdity: Because singing is no more required for the music that is made by it, than prayer is required for the fine words that it contains, but as it is the natural and proper expression of a heart rejoicing in God.

Our blessed Savour and his apostles sung an hymn; but it may reasonably be supposed, that they rather *rejoiced* in God, than made *fine* music.

Do but so live, that your heart may truly rejoice in God, that it may feel itself affected with the praises of God, and then you will find, that this state of your heart will neither want a voice, nor ear to find a tune for a Psalm. Everyone, at some time or other, finds himself able to sing in some degree; there are some times and occasions of joy, that make all people ready to express their sense of it in some sort of harmony. The joy that they feel, forces them to let their voice have a part in it.

He therefore that saith he wants a voice, or an ear, to sing a Psalm, mistakes the case; he wants that *spirit* that really rejoices in God; the dulness is in his *heart*, and not in his *ear;* and when his heart feels a true joy in God, when it has a full relish of what is expressed in the Psalms, he will find it very pleasant,

to make the motions of his voice express the motions of his heart.

Singing indeed, as it is improved into an art, as it signifies the running of the voice through such or such a compass of notes, and keeping time with a studied variety of changes, is not natural, nor the effect of any natural state of the mind; so in this sense, it is not *common* to all people, any more than those *antic* and *invented* motions which make *fine dancing*, are common to all people.

But singing, as it signifies a motion of the voice suitable to the motions of the heart, and the changing of its tone according to the meaning of the words which we utter, is as natural and common to all men, as it is to speak *high*, when they *threaten* in anger, or to speak *low*, when they are *dejected* and ask for a *pardon*.

All men therefore are singers, in the same manner as all men *think*, *speak*, *laugh*, and *lament*. For singing is no more an invention, than *grief* or *joy* are inventions.

Every state of the heart naturally puts the body into some state that is suitable to it, and is proper to show it to other people. If a man is *angry*, or *disdainful*, no one need instruct him how to express these passions by the *tone* of his voice. The *state* of his heart disposes him to a *proper* use of his voice.

If therefore there are but *few* singers of *divine* songs, if people want to be *exhorted* to this *part* of devotion; it is because there are but few, whose hearts are *raised* to that *height* of piety, as to feel any motions of *joy* and *delight* in the praises of God.

Imagine to yourself, that you had been with *Moses* when he was led through the *Red Sea;* that you had seen the waters divide themselves, and stand on an heap on both sides; that you had seen them held up till you had passed through, then let fall upon your enemies; do you think that you should then have wanted a *voice* or an *ear* to have sung with *Moses*, 'The Lord is 'my strength, and my song, and he is become my salvation,' *&c.?* I know, your own heart tells you, that all people must have been singers upon such an occasion. Let this therefore teach you, that it is the heart that tunes a voice to sing the praises of God; and that if you cannot sing these same words now with joy, it is because you are not so affected with the salvation of the world by Jesus Christ, as the *Jews* were, or you yourself would have been, with their deliverance at the *Red Sea*.

That it is the state of the heart, that disposes us to rejoice in any particular kind of singing, may be easily proved from variety of observations upon human nature An *old debauchee* may, according to the language of the world, have neither *voice* nor ear, if you only sing a *Psalm*, or a song in praise of *virtue* to

him; but yet, if in some *easy tune* you sing something that celebrates his *former debauches*, he will then, though he has no *teeth* in his head, show you, that he has both a *voice* and an *ear* to join such music. You then awaken his heart, and he as *naturally* sings to such words, as he laughs when he is pleased. And this will be the case in every song that touches the heart; if you celebrate the ruling passion of any man's heart, you put his voice in tune to join with you.

Thus if you can find a man, whose *ruling temper* is devotion, whose heart is full of God, his voice will rejoice in those songs of praise, which glorify that God who is the joy of his heart, though he has neither voice nor ear for other music. Would you therefore delightfully perform this part of devotion, it is not so necessary to learn a *tune*, or practise upon *notes*, as to prepare your heart; for as our blessed Lord saith, out of the heart proceed *evil thoughts*, *murders*, *&c.*, so it is equally true, that out of the heart proceed *holy joys*, *thanksgiving* and *praise*. If you can once say with *David*, 'My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed;' it will be very easy and natural to add, as he did, 'I will sing and 'give praise,' *&c.*

Secondly, Let us now consider another reason for this kind of devotion. As singing is a natural *effect* of joy in the heart, so it has also a natural power of rendering the heart joyful.

The soul and body are so united, that they have each of them power over one another in their actions. Certain thoughts and sentiments in the soul, produce such and such motions or actions in the body; and on the other hand, certain motions and actions of the body, have the same power of raising such and such thoughts and sentiments in the soul. So that as singing is the natural *effect* of joy in the mind, so it is as truly a natural *cause* of raising joy in the mind.

As devotion of the heart naturally breaks out into outward acts of prayer, so outward acts of prayer are natural means of raising the devotion of the heart.

It is thus in all states and tempers of the mind; as the inward state of the mind produces outward actions suitable to it, so those outward actions, have the like power of raising an inward state of mind suitable to them.

As *anger* produces angry words, so angry words increase anger.

So that if we barely consider human nature, we shall find, that *singing* or *chanting* the Psalms, is as proper and necessary to raise our hearts to a delight in God, as prayer is proper and necessary to excite in us the spirit of devotion. Every reason for one, is in all respects as strong a reason for the other.

If therefore you would know the reason and necessity of singing Psalms, you must consider the reason and necessity of praising and rejoicing in God; because singing of Psalms is as much the true exercise and support of this spirit of thanksgiving, as prayer is the true exercise and support of the spirit of devotion. And you may as well think, that you can be devout as you ought, without the use of prayer, as that you can rejoice in God as you ought, without the practice of singing Psalms. Because this singing is as much the *natural language* of praise and thanksgiving, as prayer is the natural language of devotion.

The union of soul and body is not a mixture of their substances, as we see bodies united and mixed together, but consists solely in the mutual power that they have of acting upon one another.

If two persons were in such a state of dependence upon one another, that neither of them could act, or move, or think, or feel, or suffer, or desire anything, without putting the other into the same condition, one might properly say, that they were in a state of strict union, although their substances were not united together.

Now this is the union of the soul and body; the substance of the one cannot be mixed, or united with the other; but they are held together in such a state of union, that all the actions and sufferings of the one, are at the same time the actions and sufferings of the other. The soul has no thought or passion, but the body is concerned in it; the body has no action or motion, but what in some degree affects the soul.

Now as it is the sole will of God, that is the *reason* and *cause* of all the powers and effects which you see in the world; as the *Sun* gives light and heat, not because it has any natural power of so doing; as it is fixed in a certain place, and other bodies moving about it, not because it is in the nature of the Sun to stand still, and in the nature of other bodies to move about it; but merely because it is the *will* of God, that they should be in such a state. As the *eye* is the organ, or instrument of seeing, not because the *skins*, and *coats*, and *humours* of the eye, have a natural power of giving sight: As the ears are the organs, or instruments of hearing; not because the *make* of the ear has any natural power over sounds, but merely because it is the will of God, that *seeing* and *hearing* should be thus received: So in like manner it is the sole will of God, and not the nature of a human soul or body, that is the cause of this union betwixt the soul and the body.

Now if you rightly apprehend this short account of the union of the soul and body, you will see a great deal into the reason and necessity of all the outward parts of Religion.

This union of our souls and bodies, is the reason both why we have so little, and so much power over ourselves. It is owing to this union, that we have so little power over our souls; for as we cannot prevent the effects of external objects upon our bodies, as we cannot command outward causes, so we cannot always command the inward state of our minds; because, as outward objects act upon our bodies without our leave, so our bodies act upon our minds by the laws of the union of the soul and the body: And thus you see it is owing to this union, that we have so *little* power over ourselves.

On the other hand, it is owing to this union, that we have so *much* power over ourselves. For as our souls, in a great measure, depend upon our bodies, and as we have great power over our bodies, as we can command our outward actions, and oblige ourselves to such habits of life, as naturally produce habits in the soul, as we can mortify our bodies, and remove ourselves, from objects that inflame our passions, so we have a great power over the *inward* state of our souls. Again, as we are masters of our outward actions, as we can force ourselves to outward acts of reading, praying, singing, and the like, and as all these bodily actions have an effect upon the soul, as they naturally tend to form such and such tempers in our hearts; so by being masters of these outward, bodily actions, we have great power over the inward state of the heart.

And thus it is owing to this union, that we have so much power over ourselves.

Now from this you may also see the necessity and benefit of singing Psalms, and of all the outward acts of Religion? for if the body has so much power over the soul, it is certain that all such bodily actions as affect the soul, are of great weight in Religion. Not as if there were any true worship, or piety in the actions themselves, but because they are proper to raise and support that *spirit*, which is the true worship of God.

Though therefore the seat of Religion is in the heart, yet since our bodies have a power over our hearts, since outward actions both proceed from, and enter into the heart, it is plain, that outward actions have a great power over that Religion which is seated in the heart.

We are therefore as well to use outward helps, as inward meditation, in order to beget and fix habits of piety in our hearts.

This doctrine may easily be carried too far; for by calling in too many outward means of worship, it may degenerate into superstition: as on the other hand, some have fallen into the contrary extreme. For because Religion is justly placed in the

heart, some have pursued that notion so far, as to renounce vocal prayer, and other outward acts of worship, and have resolved all religion into a *quietism*, or *mystic* intercourse with God in silence.

Now these are two *extremes* equally prejudicial to true Religion; and ought not to be objected either against internal, or external worship. As you ought not to say, that I encourage that *quietism* by placing religion in the heart: so neither ought you to say, that I encourage superstition, by showing the benefit of outward acts of worship.

For since we are neither *all soul*, nor *all body;* seeing none of our actions are either separately of the soul, or separately of the body; seeing we have no habits but such as are produced by the actions both of our souls and bodies; it is certain, that if we would arrive at habits of devotion, or delight in God, we must not only meditate and exercise our souls, but we must practise and exercise our bodies to all such outward actions, as are conformable to these inward tempers.

If we would truly prostrate our souls before God, we must use our bodies to postures of lowliness: if we desire true fervours of devotion, we must make prayer the frequent labour of our lips. If we would banish all pride and passion from our hearts, we must force ourselves to all outward actions of patience and meekness. If we would feel inward motions of joy and delight in God, we must practise all the outward acts of it, and make our voices call upon our hearts.

Now therefore, you may plainly see the reason and necessity of *singing of Psalms;* it is because outward actions are necessary to support inward tempers; and therefore the outward act of joy is necessary to raise and support the inward joy of the mind.

If any People were to leave off prayer, because they seldom find the motions of their heart answering the words which they speak, you would charge them with great absurdity. You would think it very reasonable, that they should continue their prayers, and be strict in observing all times of prayer, as the most likely means of removing the dulness and indevotion of their hearts.

Now this is very much the case as to singing of Psalms; people often sing without finding any inward joy suitable to the words which they speak; therefore they are careless of it, or wholly neglect it; not considering, that they act as absurdly, as he that should neglect prayer, because his heart was not enough affected with it. For it is certain, that this singing is as much the natural means of raising motions of joy in the mind, as prayer is the natural means of raising devotion.

I have been the longer upon this head, because of its great

importance to true religion. For there is no state of mind so holy, so excellent, and so truly perfect, as that of *thankfulness* to God, and consequently nothing is of more importance in Religion, than that which exercises and improves this habit of mind.

A *dull, uneasy, complaining* spirit, which is sometimes the spirit of those that seem careful of Religion, is yet, of all tempers, the most contrary to Religion, for it disowns that God which it pretends to adore. For he sufficiently disowns God, who does not adore him as a Being of infinite goodness.

If a man does not believe that all the world is as God's family, where nothing happens by chance, but all is guided and directed by the care and providence of a Being, that is all love and goodness to all his creatures; if a man do not believe this from his heart, he cannot be said truly to believe in God. And yet he that has this faith, has faith enough to overcome the world, and always be thankful to God. For he that believes that everything happens to him for the *best*, cannot possibly complain for the want of something that is *better*.

If therefore you live in murmurings and complaints, accusing all the accidents of life, it is not because you are a weak, infirm creature, but it is because you want the first principle of religion, a right belief in God. For as thankfulness is an express acknowledgment of the goodness of God towards you, so repinings and complaints, are as plain accusations of God's want of goodness towards you.

On the other hand, would you know who is the greatest Saint in the world: It is not he who *prays* most, or *fasts* most; it is not he who gives most *alms*, or is most eminent for temperance, chastity, or justice; but it is he who is *always thankful* to God, who *wills* everything that God *willeth*, who receives everything as an instance of God's goodness, and has a heart always ready to praise God for it.

All prayer and devotion, fastings and repentance, meditation and retirement, all sacraments and ordinances, are but so many means to render the soul thus divine, and conformable to the will of God, and to fill it with thankfulness and praise for everything that comes from God. This is the perfection of all virtues; and all virtues that do not tend to it, or proceed from it, are but so many false ornaments of a soul not converted unto God.

You need not therefore now wonder, that I lay so much stress upon singing a Psalm at all your devotions, since you see it is to form your spirit to such joy and thankfulness to God, as is the highest perfection of a divine and holy life.

If anyone would tell you the shortest, surest way to all happi-

ness, and all perfection, he must tell you to make a *rule* to yourself, to *thank and praise God for everything that happens to you.* For it is certain, that whatever seeming calamity happens to you, if you thank and praise God for it, you turn it into a blessing. Could you therefore work miracles, you could not do more for yourself, than by this *thankful spirit*, for it *heals* with a word speaking, and turns all that it touches into happiness.

If therefore you would be so true to your eternal interest, as to propose this *thankfulness* as the end of all your Religion; if you would but settle it in your mind, that this was the state that you were to aim at by all your devotions, you would then have something plain and visible to walk by in all your actions, you would then easily see the effect of your virtues, and might safely judge of your improvement in piety. For so far as you renounce all selfish tempers, and motions of your own will, and seek for no other happiness, but in the thankful reception of everything that happens to you, so far you may be safely reckoned to have advanced in piety.

And although this be the highest temper that you can aim at, though it be the noblest sacrifice that the greatest saint can offer unto God, yet is it not tied to any *time*, or *place*, or *great* occasion, but is always in your power, and may be the exercise of every day. For the *common events* of every day are sufficient to discover and exercise this temper, and may plainly show you how far you are governed in all your actions by this thankful spirit.

And for this reason, I exhort you to this method in your devotion, that every day may be made a day of thanksgiving, and that the spirit of murmur and discontent may be unable to enter into the heart, which is so often employed in singing the praises of God.

It may perhaps, after all, be objected, that although the great benefit, and excellent effects of this practice are very apparent, yet it seems not altogether so fit for *private* devotions; since it can hardly be performed without making our devotions public to other people, and seems also liable to the charge of *sounding* a *trumpet* at our prayers.

It is therefore answered; *First*, That great numbers of people have it in their power to be as private as they please: such persons therefore are excluded from this excuse, which however it may be so to others, is none to them. Therefore let such take the benefit of this excellent devotion.

Secondly, Numbers of people are by the *necessity* of their state, as *servants*, *apprentices*, *prisoners*, and *families* in small houses, forced to be continually in the presence or sight of somebody or other.

Now, are such persons to neglect their prayers, because they cannot pray without being seen? Are they not rather obliged to be more exact in them, that others may not be witnesses of their neglect, and so corrupted by their example?

Now what is here said of devotion, may surely be said of this *chanting a Psalm*, which is only a part of devotion.

The rule is this; Do not pray that you *may be seen* of men, but if your *confinement* obliges you to be always in the sight of others, be more afraid of being seen to *neglect*, than of being seen to have *recourse* to prayer.

Thirdly, The short of the matter is this. Either people can use such privacy in this practice as to have no hearers, or they cannot. If they can, then this objection vanishes as to them: and if they cannot, they should consider their *confinement*, and the *necessities* of their state, as the confinement of a *prison;* and then they have an excellent *pattern* to follow, they may imitate St. *Paul* and *Silas*, who *sung praises to God in prison*, though we are expressly told, that the *prisoners heard them*. They therefore did not refrain from this kind of devotion for fear of being heard by others. If therefore anyone is in the same necessity, either in *prison*, or out of prison, what can he do better than to follow this example?

I cannot pass by this place of Scripture, without desiring the pious reader to observe, how strongly we are here called upon to this use of Psalms, and what a mighty recommendation of it, the practice of these two great *Saints* is.

In this their great distress, in *prison*, in *chains*, under the soreness of *stripes*, in the horror of *night*, the *divinest*, *holiest* thing they could do, was to *sing praises unto God.*

And shall we, after this, need any exhortation to this holy practice? Shall we let the *day* pass without such thanksgivings, as they would not neglect in the *night?* Shall a *prison*, *chains*, and *darkness* furnish them with songs of praise, and shall we have no singings in our *closets?*

Further let it also be observed, that while these two holy men were thus employed in the most exalted part of devotion, doing that on *earth*, which *Angels* do in *Heaven*, that 'the foundations 'of the prison were shaken, all the doors were opened, and 'everyone's bands were loosed.'*

And shall we now ask for motives to this divine exercise, when instead of *arguments*, we have here such *miracles* to convince us of its mighty power with God?

Could God by a voice from Heaven more expressly call us to

* Acts xvi. 26.

these songs of praise, than by thus showing us, how he *hears*, *delivers*, and *rewards* those that use them?

But this by the way. I now return to the objection in hand; and answer *Fourthly*, That the *privacy* of our prayers is not destroyed by our *having*, but by our *seeking* witnesses of them.

If therefore nobody hears you but those you cannot separate yourself from, you are as much in *secret*, and 'your Father who 'seeth in secret,' will as truly reward your secrecy, as if you were seen by him alone.

Fifthly, *Private* prayer, as it is opposed to prayer in *public*, does not suppose that no one is to have any witness of it. For *husbands* and *wives*, *brothers* and *sisters*, *parents* and *children*, *masters* and *servants*, *tutors* and *pupils*, are to be witnesses to one another of such devotion, as may truly and properly be called private. It is far from being a duty to conceal such devotion from such near relations.

In all these cases therefore, where such relations sometimes pray together in private, and sometimes apart by themselves, the chanting of a Psalm can have nothing objected against it.

Our blessed Lord commands us, when we *fast*, to 'anoint our 'heads, and wash our faces, that we appear not unto men to fast, 'but unto our Father which is in secret.'

But this only means, that we must not make *public ostentation* to the *world* of our *fasting*.

For if no one was to fast in *private*, or could be said to fast in private, but he that had no witnesses of it, no one could keep a private fast, but he that lived by himself: For every family must know who fasts in it. Therefore the *privacy* of fasting does not suppose such a privacy as excludes *everybody* from knowing it, but such a privacy as does not seek to be known abroad.

Cornelius the devout Centurion, of whom the Scripture saith, that he 'gave much,' and 'prayed to God alway,' saith unto St. *Peter*, 'four days ago, I was fasting until this hour.'*

Now that this fasting was sufficiently *private* and acceptable to God, appears from the vision of an *Angel*, with which the holy man was blessed at that time.

But that it was not so private, as to be entirely unknown to others, appears, as from the relation of it here, so from what is said in another place, that he 'called two of his household 'servants, and a devout soldier of them that waited upon him 'continually.'† So that *Cornelius's* fasting was so far from being unknown to his family, that the soldiers and they of his household were made devout themselves, by *continually wait-*

* Acts x. 30. † Acts x. 7.

ing upon him, that is, by seeing and partaking of his good works.

As therefore the *privacy* or *excellency* of fasting, is not destroyed by being known to some particular persons, neither would the *privacy* or *excellency* of your devotions be hurt, though by *chanting* a Psalm, you should be heard by some of your family.

The whole of the matter is this. *Great part* of the world can be as private as they please, therefore let them use this excellent devotion between God and themselves.

Another *great part* of the world must, and ought to have witnesses of several of their devotions; let them therefore not neglect the use of a *Psalm* at *such times* as it ought to be known to those with whom they live, that they do not neglect their prayers. For surely there can be no harm in being known to be *singing* a Psalm, at *such times* as it *ought* to be known that you are at your *prayers*.

And if at other times, you desire to be in such secrecy at your devotions, as to have nobody suspect it, and for that reason forbear your *psalm;* I have nothing to object against it: Provided, that at the known *hours* of prayer, you never omit this practice.

For who would not be often doing that in the *day*, which St. *Paul* and *Silas* would not neglect in the middle of the night? And if when you are thus singing, it should come into your head, how the *prison shaked*, and the *doors opened*, when St. *Paul* sung, it would do your devotion no harm.

Lastly, seeing our *imaginations* have great power over our hearts, and can mightily affect us with their *representations*, it would be of great use to you, if, at the beginning of your devotions, you were to *imagine* to yourself some such representations, as might heat and warm your heart into a temper suitable to those prayers that you are then about to offer unto God.

As thus: before you begin your *psalm* of praise and rejoicing in God, make this use of your *imagination*.

Be still, and *imagine* to yourself, that you saw the heavens open, and the glorious Choirs of Cherubims and Seraphims about the throne of God. *Imagine* that you hear the music of those Angelic voices, that cease not day and night to sing the glories of him that *is*, and *was*, and *is to come*.

Help your imagination with such passages of Scripture as these: 'I beheld, and lo, in heaven a great multitude which no 'man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and 'tongues, standing before the throne, and before the lamb, clothed 'with white robes, and palms in their hands. And they cried

'with a loud voice, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the 'throne, and unto the lamb.

'And all the angels stood round about the throne, and fell 'before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, saying, 'Amen: Blessing and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and 'honour, and power, and strength, be unto God, for ever and ever. 'Amen.'*

Think upon this till your imagination has carried you above the clouds, till it has placed you amongst those heavenly beings, and made you long to bear a part in their eternal music.

If you will but use yourself to this method, and let your imagination dwell upon such representations as these, you will soon find it to be an excellent means of raising the spirit of devotion within you.

Always therefore begin your *Psalm*, or Song of praise, with these *imaginations;* and at every verse of it, imagine yourself amongst those heavenly companions, that your voice is added to theirs, and that *Angels* join with you, and you with them; and that you with a poor and low voice are singing that on earth, which they are singing in heaven.

Again, Sometimes *imagine* that you had been one of those that joined with our blessed Saviour when he *sung an Hymn.* Strive to imagine to yourself, with what *majesty* he looked; fancy that you had stood *close* by him surrounded with his *glory.* Think how your heart would have been *inflamed*, what *ecstasies* of joy you would have then felt, when *singing* with the Son of God. Think again and again, with what joy and devotion you would then have sung, had this been really your happy state, and what a punishment you should have thought it, to have been then silent; and let this teach you how to be affected with *Psalms* and *Hymns* of thanksgiving.

Again, Sometimes imagine to yourself, that you saw holy *David* with his *hands* upon his *harp*, and his *eyes* fixed upon *heaven*, calling in transport upon all the Creation, *Sun* and *Moon*, *light* and *darkness*, *day* and *night*, *men* and *angels*, to join with his rapturous soul in praising the Lord of Heaven.

Dwell upon this imagination, till you think you are singing with this divine musician, and let such a companion teach you to exalt your heart unto God in the following Psalm; which you may use constantly first in the morning.

Psalm cxlv. 'I will magnify thee, O God my king: and I 'will praise thy name for ever and ever,' *&c.*

These following Psalms, as the 34th, 96th, 103rd, 111th, 146th,

*Rev. vii. 9.

147th, are such as wonderfully set forth the glory of God; and therefore you may keep to any one of them, at any particular hour, as you like: Or you may take the finest parts of any Psalms, and so adding them together, may make them fitter for your own devotion.

Chapter XVI.

Recommending devotion at nine o'clock in the morning, called in Scripture the third hour *of the day. The subject of these prayers is humility.*

I AM now come to another hour of prayer, which in Scripture is called the *third hour* of the day; but according to our way of numbering the hours, it is called the ninth hour of the morning.

The devout Christian must at this time look upon himself, as called upon by God to renew his acts of prayer, and address himself again to the throne of grace.

There is indeed no express command in Scripture to repeat our devotions at this hour. But then it is to be considered also, that neither is there any express command to begin and end the day with prayer. So that if that be looked upon as a reason for neglecting devotion at this hour, it may as well be urged as a reason, for neglecting devotion both at the beginning and end of the day.

But if the practice of the saints in all ages of the world, if the customs of the pious *Jews* and primitive Christians be of any force with us, we have authority enough to persuade us, to make this hour a constant season of devotion.

The Scriptures show us, how this hour was consecrated to devotion both by *Jews* and Christians; so that if we desire to number ourselves amongst those whose hearts were devoted unto God, we must not let this hour pass, without presenting us to him in some solemnities of devotion. And besides this authority for this practice, the reasonableness of it, is sufficient to invite us to the observance of it.

For if you were up at a good time in the morning, your first devotions will have been at a *proper* distance from this hour; you will have been long enough at other business, to make it

proper for you to return to this greatest of all business, the raising your soul and affections unto God.

But if you have risen so *late*, as to be hardly able to begin your first devotions at this *hour*, which is proper for your *second*, you may thence learn, that the indulging yourself in the morning sleep is no *small* matter; since it sets you so far *back* in your devotions, and robs you of those graces and blessings, which are obtained by frequent prayers.

For if prayer has *power* with God, if it *looses* the bands of sin, if it *purifies* the soul, *reforms* our hearts, and draws down the *aids* of divine grace; how can that be reckoned a small matter, which robs us of an hour of prayer?

Imagine yourself somewhere placed in the air, as a spectator of all that passes in the world; and that you saw in one view, the devotions which all Christian people offer unto God every day. Imagine, that you saw some piously dividing the *day* and *night*, as the primitive Christians did, and constant at all hours of devotion, *singing* Psalms, and *calling* upon God, at all those times, that *Saints* and *Martyrs* received their gifts and graces from God.

Imagine that you saw others living without any rules, as to *times* and *frequency* of prayer, and only at their devotions sooner or later, as *sleep* and *laziness* happens to permit them.

Now if you were to see this, as God sees it, how do you suppose you should be affected with this sight? What judgment do you imagine, you should pass upon these different sorts of people? Could you think, that those who were thus *exact* in their rules of devotion, got nothing by their *exactness?* Could you think, that their prayers were received just in the same manner, and procured them no more blessings, than theirs do, who prefer laziness and indulgence to *times* and *rules* of devotion?

Could you take the one to be as true servants of God, as the other? Could you imagine, that those who were thus different in their *lives*, would find no difference in their states after *death?* Could you think it a matter of *indifferency*, to which of these people you were *most* like?

If not, let it be now your care, to join yourself to that number of devout people, to that society of saints, amongst whom you desire to be found, when you leave the world.

And although the bare *number* and *repetition* of our prayers is of little value, yet since prayer rightly and attentively performed, is the most *natural means* of amending and purifying our hearts; since *importunity* and *frequency* in prayer is as much pressed upon us by Scripture, as prayer itself; we may be sure, that

when we are frequent and importunate in our prayers, we are taking the *best means*, of obtaining the highest benefits of a devout life.

And on the other hand, they, who through negligence, laziness, or any other indulgence, render themselves either unable, or uninclined to observe *rules* and *hours* of devotion, we may be sure, that they deprive themselves of those graces and blessings, which an *exact* and *fervent* devotion procures from God.

Now as this frequency of prayer, is founded in the doctrines of Scripture, and recommended to us by the practice of the true worshippers of God; so we ought not to think ourselves excused from it, but where we can show, that we are spending our time in such business, as is more acceptable to God, than these returns of prayer.

Least of all must we imagine, that *dulness*, *negligence*, *indulgence*, or *diversions*, can be any pardonable excuses, for our not observing an exact and frequent method of devotion.

If you are of a devout spirit, you will rejoice at these returns of prayer, which keep your soul in an holy enjoyment of God; which change your passions into divine love, and fill your heart with stronger joys and consolations, than you can possibly meet with in anything else.

And if you are not of a devout spirit, then you are moreover obliged to this frequency of prayer, to train and exercise your heart into a true sense and feeling of devotion.

Now seeing the holy spirit of the Christian Religion, and the example of the saints of all ages, calls upon you thus to divide the day into hours of prayer; so it will be highly beneficial to you, to make a right choice of those matters, which are to be the subject of your prayers, and to keep *every* hour of prayer appropriated to some *particular* subject, which you may alter, or enlarge, according as the state you are in requires.

By this means, you will have an opportunity of being *large* and *particular* in all the *parts* of any virtue or grace, which you then make the subject of your prayers. And by asking for it in *all* its parts, and making it the substance of a *whole* prayer once every day, you will soon find a mighty change in your heart; and that you cannot thus constantly pray, for all the parts of any virtue every day of your life, and yet live the rest of the day contrary to it.

If a *worldly-minded* man, was to pray every day against all the *instances* of a worldly temper: If he should make a large *description* of the temptations of covetousness, and desire God to assist him to reject them all, and to disappoint him in all his covetous designs, he would find his conscience so much *awakened*,

that he would be forced either to forsake such prayers, or to forsake a worldly life.

The same will hold true in any other instance. And if *we ask, and have not,* 'tis *because we ask amiss.* Because we ask in *cold* and *general* forms, such as only *name* the virtues, without describing their *particular parts*, such as are not enough particular to our *condition*, and therefore make no change in our hearts. Whereas, when a man enumerates all the parts of any virtue in his prayers, his conscience is thereby awakened, and he is frighted at seeing how far short he is of it. And this stirs him up to an ardour in devotion, when he sees how much he wants of that virtue, which he is praying for.

I have, in the last chapter, laid before you the excellency of *praise* and *thanksgiving*, and recommended that as the subject of your first devotions in the morning.

And because an *humble state* of soul, is the very state of Religion, because humility is the *life* and *soul* of piety, the *foundation* and *support* of every virtue and good work, the best *guard* and *security* of all holy affections; I shall recommend humility to you, as highly proper to be made the constant subject of your devotions, at this *third hour* of the day; earnestly desiring you to think no day *safe*, or *likely* to end well, in which you have not thus *early* put yourself in this posture of humility, and called upon God to carry you through the day, in the exercise of a *meek* and *lowly* spirit.

This virtue is so essential to the *right state* of our souls, that there is no pretending to a *reasonable* or *pious* life without it. We may as well think to see without *eyes*, or live without *breath*, as to live in the spirit of religion, without the spirit of *humility*.

And although it is thus the *soul* and *essence* of all religious duties, yet is it, generally speaking, the least *understood*, the least *regarded*, the least *intended*, the least *desired* and *sought* after, of all other virtues, amongst all sorts of Christians.

No people have more occasion to be afraid of the approaches of pride, than those who have made *some advances* in a pious life. For pride can grow as well upon our *virtues*, as our *vices*, and steals upon us on all occasions.

Every good thought that we have, every good action that we do, lays us open to pride, and exposes us to the assaults of vanity and self-satisfaction.

It is not only the beauty of our persons, the gifts of fortune, our natural talents, and the distinctions of life; but even our *devotions* and *alms*, our *fastings* and *humiliations*, expose us to fresh and strong temptations of this evil spirit.

And it is for this reason, that I so earnestly advise every *devout* person to begin every day in this exercise of humility, that he may go on in *safety* under the protection of this good guide, and not fall a sacrifice to his own progress in those virtues, which are to save mankind from destruction.

Humility does not consist, in having a *worse* opinion of ourselves than we deserve, or in abasing ourselves *lower* than we really are. But as all virtue is founded in *truth*, so humility is founded in a *true* and *just* sense of our *weakness*, *misery*, and *sin*. He that rightly feels and lives in this sense of his condition, lives in humility.

The *weakness* of our state appears from our inability to do anything, as of ourselves. In our natural state we are entirely without *any power;* we are indeed active beings, but can only act by a power, that is every *moment* lent us from God.

We have no more power of our own to move a *hand*, or stir a *foot*, than to move the *sun*, or stop the *clouds*.

When we *speak* a word, we feel no more power in ourselves to do it, than we feel ourselves able to raise the *dead*. For we act no more within our *own power*, or by our own strength, when we *speak* a word, or make a *sound*, than the *Apostles* acted within their own power, or by their own strength, when a *word* from their mouth cast out *devils*, and cured *diseases*.

As it was solely the power of God, that enabled them to speak to *such purposes*, so it is solely the power of God that enables us to speak *at all*.

We indeed find that we can *speak*, as we find that we are *alive;* but the actual exercise of speaking is no more in our own power, than the actual enjoyment of life.

This is the dependent, helpless poverty of our state; which is a great reason for humility. For since we neither are, nor can do anything of ourselves, to be proud of anything that we are, or of anything that we can do, and to ascribe glory to ourselves for these things, as our own ornaments, has the guilt both of *stealing* and *lying*. It has the guilt of stealing, as it gives to ourselves those things which only belong to God. It has the guilt of lying, as it is the denying the truth of our state, and pretending to be something that we are not.

Secondly, Another argument for humility, is founded in the *misery* of our condition.

Now the misery of our condition appears in this, that we use these *borrowed* powers of our nature, to the *torment* and *vexation* of ourselves, and our fellow-creatures.

God Almighty has entrusted us with the use of reason, and we use it to the disorder and corruption of our nature. We reason

ourselves into all kinds of folly and misery, and make our lives the sport of foolish and extravagant passions: Seeking after imaginary happiness in all kinds of shapes, creating to ourselves a thousand wants, amusing our hearts with false hopes and fears, using the world worse than irrational animals, envying, vexing, and tormenting one another with restless passions, and unreasonable contentions.

Let any man but look back upon his own life, and see what use he has made of his reason, how little he has consulted it, and how less he has followed it. What foolish *passions,* what vain *thoughts,* what needless *labours,* what extravagant *projects,* have taken up the greatest part of his life. How foolish he has been in his *words* and *conversation;* how seldom he has done well with *judgment,* and how often he has been kept from doing ill by *accident;* how seldom he has been able to *please* himself, and how often he has *displeased* others; how often he has changed his counsels, hated what he loved, and loved what he hated; how often he has been enraged and transported at *trifles,* pleased and displeased with the very *same things,* and constantly changing from one vanity to another. Let a man but take this view of his own life, and he will see reason enough to confess, that *pride was not made for man.*

Let him but consider, that if the world knew all that of him, which he knows of himself; if they saw what *vanity* and *passions* govern his inside, and what secret *tempers* sully and corrupt his best actions, he would have no more pretence to be honoured and admired for his *goodness* and *wisdom,* than a *rotten* and *distempered* body, to be loved and admired for its *beauty* and *comeliness.*

This is so true, and so known to the hearts of almost all people, that nothing would appear more dreadful to them, than to have their hearts thus fully discovered to the eyes of all beholders.

And perhaps there are very few people in the world, who would not rather choose to die, than to have all their *secret* follies, the *errors* of their judgments, the *vanity* of their minds, the *falseness* of their pretences, the frequency of their *vain* and disorderly *passions,* their *uneasiness, hatreds, envies,* and *vexations,* made known unto the world.

And shall pride be entertained in a heart, thus *conscious* of its own *miserable behaviour?*

Shall a creature in such a condition, that he could not support himself under the *shame* of being known to the world in his *real state;* shall such a creature, because his shame is only known to God, to holy Angels, and his own conscience; shall he, in the

sight of God and holy angels, dare to be *vain* and *proud* of himself?

Thirdly, If to this we add the *shame* and *guilt* of sin, we shall find a still greater reason for humility.

No creature that had lived in innocence, would have thereby got any pretence for *self-honour* and *esteem;* because as a creature, all that it *is*, or *has*, or *does*, is from God, and therefore the honour of all that belongs to it is only due to God.

But if a creature that is a *sinner*, and under the *displeasure* of the great governor of all the world, and deserving nothing from him, but pains and punishments for the *shameful* abuse of his powers; if such a creature pretends to self-glory for anything that he is, or does, he can only be said to glory in his shame.

Now how *monstrous* and *shameful* the nature of sin is, is sufficiently apparent from that *great atonement*, that is necessary to cleanse us from the guilt of it.

Nothing less has been required to take away the guilt of our sins, than the sufferings and death of the Son of God. Had he not taken our nature upon him, our nature had been for ever separated from God, and incapable of ever appearing before him.

And is there any room for *pride*, or *self-glory*, whilst we are partakers of *such a nature* as this?

Have our sins rendered us so abominable and odious to him that made us, that he could not so much as *receive* our prayers, or *admit* our repentance, till the Son of God made himself man, and became a suffering advocate for our whole race; and can we in *this state*, pretend to high thoughts of ourselves? Shall we presume to take delight in our *own worth*, who are not worthy so much as to *ask pardon* for our sins, without the mediation and intercession of the Son of God?

Thus deep is the foundation of humility laid, in these deplorable circumstances of our condition; which show, that it is as great an offence against truth, and the reason of things, for a man in this state of things, to lay claim to any degrees of glory, as to pretend to the honour of creating himself. If man will boast of anything as his own, he must boast of his *misery* and *sin;* for there is nothing else but this, that is his own property.

Turn your eyes towards heaven, and fancy that you saw what is doing there; that you saw *cherubims* and *seraphims*, and all the glorious *inhabitants* of that place, all united in one work; not seeking *glory* from one another, not labouring their own *advancement*, not contemplating their own *perfections*, not singing their own *praises*, not valuing *themselves*, and despising *others*, but all employed in one and the same work, all happy in

one and the same joy; 'casting down their crowns before the 'throne of God, giving glory, and honour, and power to him 'alone.'*

Then turn your eyes to the *fallen world*, and consider how unreasonable and odious it must be, for such poor *worms*, such miserable *sinners*, to take delight in their own *fancied glories*, whilst the highest and most glorious sons of heaven, seek for no other greatness and honour, but that of ascribing all honour and greatness, and glory to God alone?

Pride is only the disorder of the *fallen world*, it has no place amongst other beings; it can only subsist where *ignorance* and *sensuality*, *lies* and *falsehood*, *lusts* and *impurity* reign.

Let a man, when he is most delighted with his own *figure*, look upon a *crucifix*, and contemplate our blessed Lord *stretched* out, and *nailed* upon a *Cross*; and then let him consider, how absurd it must be, for a heart full of *pride* and *vanity*, to pray to God, through the sufferings of such a *meek* and *crucified* Saviour?

These are the reflections that you are often to meditate upon, that you may thereby be disposed to walk before God and man, in such a spirit of humility, as becomes the *weak*, *miserable*, *sinful* state of all that are descended from fallen *Adam*.

When you have by such general reflections as these, convinced your mind of the reasonableness of humility, you must not content yourself with this, as if you were therefore humble, because your mind acknowledges the reasonableness of humility, and declares against pride. But you must immediately enter yourself into the practice of this virtue, like a *young beginner*, that has all of it to learn, that can learn but little at a time, and with great difficulty. You must consider, that you have not only this virtue to learn, but that you must be content to proceed as a learner in it all your time, endeavouring after greater degrees of it, and practising every day *acts* of humility, as you every day practise acts of devotion.

You would not imagine yourself to be devout, because in your judgment you approved of prayers, and often declared your mind in favour of devotion. Yet how many people imagine themselves humble enough, for no other reason, but because they often commend humility, and make vehement declarations against pride?

Cæcus is a rich man, of good birth, and very fine parts. He is fond of *dress*, curious in the *smallest* matters that can add any *ornament* to his person. He is haughty and imperious to all his

* Rev. iv. 10, 11.

inferiors, is very full of everything that he says, or does, and never imagines it possible, for such a judgment as his to be mistaken. He can bear no contradiction, and discovers the weakness of your understanding, as soon as ever you oppose him. He changes everything in his *house*, his *habit*, and his *equipage*, as often as anything more elegant comes in his way. *Cæcus* would have been very religious, but that he always thought he was so.

There is nothing so odious to *Cæcus* as a proud man; and the misfortune is, that in this he is so very quick-sighted, that he discovers in almost everybody, some *strokes* of vanity.

On the other hand, he is exceeding fond of humble and modest persons. Humility, says he, is so amiable a quality, that it forces our esteem wherever we meet with it. There is no possibility of despising the *meanest* person that has it, or of esteeming the *greatest* man that wants it.

Cæcus no more suspects himself to be proud, than he suspects his want of sense. And the reason of it is, because he always finds himself so in love with humility, and so enraged at pride.

It is very true, *Cæcus*, you speak *sincerely*, when you say you love humility, and abhor pride. You are no *hypocrite*, you speak the *true* sentiments of your mind; but then take this along with you, *Cæcus*, that you only love humility, and hate pride, in *other people*. You never once in your life thought of any other humility, or of any other pride, than that which you have seen in *other people*.

The case of *Cæcus* is a common case; many people live in all the instances of pride, and indulge every vanity that can enter into their minds, and yet never suspect themselves to be governed by pride and vanity, because they know how much they dislike proud people, and how mightily they are pleased with humility and modesty, wherever they find them.

All their speeches in favour of humility, and all their railings against pride, are looked upon as so many true exercises, and effects of their own humble spirit.

Whereas in truth, these are so far from being proper acts, or proofs of humility, that they are great arguments of the want of it.

For the fuller of pride anyone is himself, the more impatient will he be at the smallest instances of it in other people. And the less humility anyone has in his own mind, the more will he demand, and be delighted with it in other people.

You must therefore act by a quite contrary measure, and reckon yourself only so far humble, as you impose *every instance* of humility upon yourself, and *never* call for it in other people.

So far an enemy to pride, as you never *spare* it in yourself, nor ever *censure* it in other persons.

Now in order to do this, you need only consider, that pride and humility signify nothing to you, but so far as they are your own ; that they do you neither good nor harm, but as they are the tempers of your heart.

The loving therefore of humility is of no benefit or advantage to you, but so far as you love to see all your own thoughts, words, and actions governed by it. And the hating of pride does you no good, is no perfection in you, but so far as you hate to harbour any degree of it in your own heart.

Now in order to begin, and set out well in the practice of humility, you must take it for granted that you are *proud*, that you have all your life been more or less infected with this unreasonable temper.

You should believe also, that it is your *greatest* weakness, that your heart is most *subject* to it, that it is so *constantly* stealing upon you, that you have reason to watch and suspect its approaches in all your actions.

For this is what most people, especially new beginners in a pious life, may with great truth think of themselves.

For there is no one vice, that is more deeply rooted in our nature, or that receives such constant nourishment from almost everything that we think or do. There being hardly anything in the world that we *want* or *use*, or any *action* or *duty* of life, but pride finds some means or other to take hold of it. So that at what time soever we begin to offer ourselves to God, we can hardly be surer of anything than that we have a great deal of pride to repent of.

If therefore you find it disagreeable to your mind, to entertain this opinion of yourself, and that you cannot put yourself amongst those that want to be cured of pride, you may be as sure, as if an *Angel* from heaven had told you, that you have not only much, but all your humility to seek.

For you can have no greater sign of a more confirmed pride, than when you think that you are humble enough. He that thinks he loves God enough, shows himself to be an entire stranger to that holy passion ; so he that thinks he has humility enough, shows that he is not so much as a beginner in the practice of true humility.

Chapter XVII.

Showing how difficult the practice of humility is made, by the general spirit and temper of the world. How Christianity requireth us to live contrary to the world.

EVERY person, when he first applies himself to the exercise of this virtue of humility, must, as I said before, consider himself as a *learner*, that is to learn something that is contrary to former tempers and habits of mind, and which can only be got by *daily* and *constant* practice.

He has not only as much to do, as he that has some new *art*, or *science* to learn, but he has also a great deal to *unlearn:* He is to forget, and lay aside his *own spirit*, which has been a long while fixing and forming itself; he must forget, and depart from abundance of passions and opinions, which the *fashion* and *vogue*, and spirit of the world, have made natural to him.

He must lay aside his own spirit; because as we are born in *sin*, so in *pride*, which is as *natural* to us as self-love, and continually springs from it. And this is the reason, why Christianity is so often represented as a *new birth*, and a *new spirit*.

He must lay aside the opinions and passions which he has received from the world; because the *vogue* and *fashion* of the world, by which we have been carried away, as in a *torrent*, before we could pass right judgments of the value of things, is, in many respects, contrary to *humility:* so that we must *unlearn* what the spirit of the world has taught us, before we can be governed by the spirit of humility.

The Devil is called in Scripture the prince of this world, because he has great power in it, because many of its rules and principles are invented by this evil spirit, the father of all lies and falsehood, to separate us from God, and prevent our return to happiness.

Now according to the *spirit* and *vogue* of this world, whose corrupt air we have all breathed, there are many things that pass for *great* and *honourable*, and most *desirable*, which yet are so far from being so, that the *true greatness* and honour of our nature consist in the not desiring them.

To abound in wealth, to have fine houses, and rich clothes, to be beautiful in our persons, to have titles of dignity, to be above

our fellow-creatures, to command the bows and obeisance of other people, to be looked on with admiration, to overcome our enemies with power, to subdue all that oppose us, to set out ourselves in as much splendour as we can, to live highly and magnificently, to eat and drink, and delight ourselves in the most costly manner, these are the *great*, the *honourable*, the *desirable* things, to which the *spirit* of the world turns the eyes of all people. And many a man is afraid of *standing* still, and not engaging in the pursuit of these things, lest the same world should take him for a *fool*.

The history of the Gospel, is chiefly the history of Christ's *conquest* over this *spirit* of the world. And the number of true Christians, is only the number of those, who following the *Spirit* of Christ, have lived *contrary* to this spirit of the world.

'If any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.' Again, 'Whosoever is born of God, overcometh the world. Set 'your affections on things above, and not on things on the earth; 'for ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.' This is the language of the whole New Testament. This is the *mark* of Christianity; you are to be *dead*, that is, dead to the *spirit* and *temper* of the world, and live a new life in the *Spirit* of Jesus Christ.

But notwithstanding the clearness and plainness of these doctrines which thus renounce the world, yet great part of Christians live and die slaves to the *customs* and *temper* of the world.

How many people swell with *pride* and *vanity*, for such things as they would not know how to value at all, but that they are admired in the world?

Would a man take *ten years* more drudgery in business to add *two horses* more to his coach, but that he knows, that the world most of all admires a *coach* and *six?* How fearful are many people of having their houses poorly furnished, or themselves meanly clothed, for this only reason, lest the world should make no account of them, and place them amongst *low* and *mean* people?

How often would a man have *yielded* to the haughtiness and ill-nature of others, and shown a *submissive* temper, but that he dares not pass for such a poor-spirited man in the *opinion* of the world?

Many a man would often drop a *resentment*, and forgive an *affront*, but that he is afraid, if he should, the world would not forgive him?

How many would practise Christian *temperance* and sobriety in its utmost *perfection*, were it not for the censure which the world passes upon such a life?

Others have frequent intentions of living up to the *rules* of

Christian perfection, which they are frighted from, by considering what the world would say of them.

Thus do the impressions which we have received from living in the world enslave our minds, that we dare not attempt to be *eminent* in the sight of God, and holy Angels, for fear of being little in the eyes of the world.

From this quarter arises the greatest difficulty of humility, because it cannot subsist in any mind, but so far as it is dead to the world, and has parted with all desires of enjoying its greatness and honours. So that in order to be truly humble, you must unlearn all those notions, which you have been all your life learning from this corrupt spirit of the world.

You can make no *stand* against the assaults of pride, the meek affections of humility can have no place in your soul, till you stop the power of the world over you, and resolve against a *blind obedience* to its laws.

And when you are once advanced thus far, as to be able to stand still in the torrent of worldly *fashions* and *opinions*, and, examine the *worth* and *value* of things which are most admired and valued in the world, you have gone a great way in the gaining of your freedom, and have laid a good foundation for the amendment of your heart.

For as great as the power of the world is, it is all built upon a *blind obedience*, and we need only open our eyes, to get rid of its power.

Ask who you will, *learned* or *unlearned*, everyone seems to know and confess, that the general temper and spirit of the world, is nothing else but *humour*, *folly*, and *extravagance*.

Who will not own, that the wisdom of *Philosophy*, the piety of *Religion*, were always confined to a small number? And is not this expressly owning and confessing, that the *common spirit* and *temper* of the world, is neither according to the wisdom of *Philosophy*, nor the piety of *Religion*.

The world therefore seems enough condemned, even by itself, to make it very easy for a thinking man to be of the same judgment.

And therefore I hope, you will not think it a *hard saying*, that in order to be *humble*, you must withdraw your obedience from that *vulgar spirit*, which gives laws to *Fops* and *Coquettes*, and form your judgments according to the wisdom of *Philosophy*, and the piety of *Religion*. Who would be afraid of making such a change as this?

Again, To lessen your fear and regard to the opinion of the world, think how soon the world will disregard you, and have no more thought or concern about you, than about the *poorest animal* that died in a *ditch*.

Your friends, if they can, may bury you with some distinction, and set up a monument, to let posterity see that your *dust* lies under such a *Stone;* and when that is done, all is done. Your place is filled up by another, the world is just in the same state it was, you are blotted out of its sight, and as much forgotten by the world, as if you had never belonged to it.

Think upon the *rich*, the *great*, and the *learned* persons, that have made great figures, and been high in the esteem of the world; many of them died in your time, and yet they are sunk, and lost, and gone, and as much disregarded by the world, as if they had been only so many *bubbles of water.*

Think again, how many poor souls see heaven lost, and lie now expecting a miserable eternity, for their service and homage to a world, that thinks itself every whit as well without them, and is just as merry as it was, when they were in it.

Is it therefore worth your while to lose the *smallest degree* of virtue, for the sake of pleasing so *bad a master*, and so *false a friend* as the world is?

Is it worth your while to bow the knee to such an *idol* as this, that so soon will have neither *eyes*, nor *ears*, nor a *heart* to regard you, instead of serving that great, and holy, and mighty God, that will make all his servants partakers of his own eternity?

Will you let the fear of a false world, that has no love for you, keep you from the fear of that God who has only created you, that he may love and bless you to all eternity?

Lastly, you must consider what behaviour the profession of Christianity requireth of you, with regard to the world.

Now this is plainly delivered in these words: 'Who gave 'himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present 'evil world.'* Christianity therefore implieth a deliverance from this world; and he that professeth it, professeth to live contrary to everything, and every temper, that is peculiar to this evil world.

St. *John* declareth this opposition to the world in this manner, 'They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and 'the world heareth them. We are of God.'† This is the description of the followers of Christ; and it is proof enough, that no people are to be reckoned Christians in reality, who in their hearts and tempers belong to this world. 'We know,' saith the same Apostle, 'that we are of God, and the whole world 'lieth in wickedness.'‡ Christians therefore can no further know that they are of God, than so far as they know they are

* Gal. i. 4. † 1 John iv. 5. ‡ 1 John v. 19.

not of the world ; that is, that they do not live according to the *ways* and *spirit* of the world. For all the ways, and maxims, and politics, and tempers of the world, lie in wickedness. And he is only of God, or born of God in Christ Jesus, who *has overcome this world*, that is, who has chosen to live by faith, and govern his actions by the principles of a wisdom, revealed from God by Christ Jesus.

St. *Paul* takes it for a certainty, so well known to Christians, that they are no longer to be considered as living in this world, that he thus argues from it, as from an undeniable principle, concerning the abolishing the rites of the *Jewish* law : 'Where-'fore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, 'why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordi-'nances?'* Here could be no argument in this, but in the Apostle's taking it for undeniable, that Christians knew, that their profession required them to have done with all the tempers, and passions of this world, to live as citizens of the new *Jerusalem*, and to have their conversations in heaven.

Our blessed Lord himself, has fully determined this point, in these words : 'They are not of this world, as I am not of this 'world.' This is the state of Christianity with regard to this world. If you are not thus out of, and contrary to the world, you want the distinguishing mark of Christianity ; you do not belong to Christ, but by being out of the world, as he was out of it.

We may deceive ourselves, if we please, with vain and softening comments upon these words, but they are, and will be understood in their first simplicity and plainness, by everyone that reads them in the same spirit that our blessed Lord spoke them. And to understand them in any lower, less significant meaning, is to let carnal wisdom explain away that doctrine, by which itself was to be destroyed.

The Christian's great conquest over the world, is all contained in the mystery of Christ upon the *Cross*. It was there, and from thence, that he taught all Christians how they were to come out of, and conquer the world, and what they were to do in order to be his Disciples. And all the *doctrines*, *sacraments*, and *institutions* of the Gospel, are only so many explications of the meaning, and applications of the benefit of this great mystery.

And the state of Christianity implieth nothing else, but an *entire*, *absolute* conformity to that *spirit*, which Christ showed in the mysterious sacrifice of himself upon the *cross*.

Every man therefore is only so far a Christian, as he partakes

* Col. ii. 20.

of this spirit of Christ. It was this that made St. *Paul* so passionately express himself, 'God forbid that I should glory, 'save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ:' But why does he glory? Is it because Christ had suffered in his stead, and had excused him from suffering? No, by no means. But it was because his Christian profession had called him to the honour of suffering with Christ, and of dying to the world under reproach and contempt, as he had done upon the cross. For he immediately adds, 'by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I 'unto the world.'* This you see was the reason of his glorying in the cross of Christ, because it had called him to a like state of death and crucifixion to the world.

Thus was the cross of Christ, in St. *Paul's* days, the glory of Christians; not as it signified their not being ashamed to own a Master that was crucified, but as it signified their glorying in a Religion, which was nothing else but a doctrine of the Cross, that called them to the same suffering spirit, the same sacrifice of themselves, the same renunciation of the world, the same humility and weakness, the same patient bearing of injuries, reproaches, and contempts, and the same dying to all the greatness, honours, and happiness of this world, which Christ showed upon the Cross.

To have a true idea of Christianity, we must not consider our blessed Lord, as suffering in *our stead*, but as our *representative*, acting in our *name*, and with such particular merit, as to make our *joining* with him *acceptable* unto God.

He suffered, and was a sacrifice, to make our sufferings and sacrifice of ourselves fit to be received by God. And we are to suffer, to be crucified, to die, and rise with Christ, or else his crucifixion, death, and resurrection will profit us nothing.

The necessity of this conformity to all that Christ did, and suffered upon our account, is very plain from the whole tenor of Scripture.

First, as to his *sufferings*, this is the only condition of our being saved by them, 'if we suffer with him, we shall also reign 'with him.'

Secondly, as to his *Crucifixion:* 'Knowing this, that our old 'man is crucified with him,'† *&c.* Here you see, Christ is not crucified in *our stead;* but unless our old man be really crucified with him, the cross of Christ will profit us nothing.

Thirdly, as to the death of Christ, the condition is this: 'If we 'be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with 'him.' If therefore Christ be dead alone, if we are not dead

* Gal. vi. 14. † Rom. vi. 6.

with him, we are as sure from this Scripture, that we shall not live with him.

Lastly, as to the *resurrection* of Christ, the Scripture showeth us how we are to partake of the benefit of it: 'If ye be risen 'with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ 'sitteth on the right hand of God.'*

Thus you see, how plainly the Scripture sets forth our blessed Lord, as our *representative* acting and suffering in our name, binding and obliging us to conform to all that he did and suffered for us.

It was for this reason, that the holy Jesus said of his disciples, and in them of all true believers, 'They are not of this world, 'as I am not of this world.' Because all true believers conforming to the *sufferings*, *crucifixion*, *death*, and *resurrection* of Christ, live no longer after the spirit and temper of this world, but their *life is hid with Christ in God.*

This is the state of separation from the world, to which all orders of Christians are called. They must so far renounce all worldly tempers, be so far governed by the things of another life, as to show, that they are truly and really *crucified*, *dead*, and *risen* with Christ. And it is as necessary for all Christians, to conform to this *great change* of spirit, to be thus in Christ *new creatures*, as it was necessary that Christ should *suffer*, *die*, and *rise* again for our salvation.

How high the Christian life is placed above the ways of this world, is wonderfully described by St. *Paul* in these words: 'Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh; yea, 'though we have known Christ after the flesh; yet henceforth 'know we him no more. Therefore if any man be in Christ, he 'is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all 'things are become new.'†

He that feels the *force* and *spirit* of these words, can hardly bear any human interpretation of them. Henceforth, says he, that is, since the death and resurrection of Christ, the state of Christianity is become so glorious a state, that we do not even consider Christ himself as in the flesh upon earth, but as a God of glory in heaven; we know and consider ourselves not as men in the flesh, but as fellow-members of a new society, that are to have all our hearts, our tempers, and conversation in heaven.

Thus is it that Christianity has placed us out of, and above the world; and we fall from our calling, as soon as we fall into the tempers of the world.

Now as it was the spirit of the world that nailed our blessed

* Col. iii. 1. † 2 Cor. v. 16.

Lord to the *cross;* so every man that has the spirit of Christ that opposes the world as he did, will certainly be crucified by the world some way or other.

For Christianity still lives in the same world that Christ did; and these two will be utter enemies, till the kingdom of darkness is entirely at an end.

Had you lived with our Saviour as his true disciple, you had then been hated as he was; and if you now live in his spirit, the world will be the same enemy to you now, that it was to him then.

'If ye were of the world,' saith our blessed Lord, 'the world 'would love its own; but because ye are not of the world, but I 'have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth 'you.'*

We are apt to lose the true meaning of these words, by considering them only as an *historical description*, of something that was the state of our Saviour and his disciples at that time. But this is reading the Scripture as a *dead letter;* for they exactly describe the state of true Christians at this, and all other times, to the end of the world.

For as *true Christianity* is nothing else but the spirit of Christ, so whether that spirit appear in the person of Christ himself, or his Apostles, or followers in any age, it is the same thing; whoever hath his spirit, will be hated, despised, and condemned by the world, as he was.

For the world will always love its own, and none but its own: this is as certain and unchangeable, as the contrariety betwixt *light* and *darkness.*

When the holy Jesus saith, 'If the world hate you,' he does not add by way of consolation, that it may some time or other cease its hatred, or that it will not always hate them; but he only gives this as a reason for their hearing it, 'You know that 'it hated me, before it hated you:' signifying, that it was he, that is, his spirit, that by reason of its contrariety to the world, was then, and always would be hated by it.

You will perhaps say, that the world is now become Christian, at least that part of it where we live; and therefore the world is not now to be considered in that state of opposition to Christianity, as when it was *heathen.*

It is granted, the world now professeth Christianity. But will anyone say, that this Christian world is of the spirit of Christ? Are its general tempers the tempers of Christ? Are the passions of sensuality, self-love, pride, covetousness, ambition,

* John xv. 19.

and vain-glory, less contrary to the spirit of the Gospel, now they are amongst Christians, than when they were amongst heathens? Or will you say, that the tempers and passions of the heathen world are lost and gone?

Consider, *secondly*, what you are to mean by the world. Now this is fully described to our hands by St. *John*. 'All that is in 'the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the 'pride of life,'* *&c.* This is an exact and full description of the world. Now will you say, that *this world* is become *Christian?* But if all this still subsists, then the *same world* is now in being, and the same enemy to Christianity, that was in St. *John's* days.

It was this world that St. *John* condemned, as being not of the Father; whether therefore it outwardly professeth, or openly persecuteth Christianity, it is still in the same state of contrariety to the true spirit and holiness of the Gospel.

And indeed the world by professing Christianity, is so far from being a less dangerous enemy than it was before, that it has by its favours destroyed more Christians, than ever it did by the most violent persecution.

We must therefore be so far from considering the world as in a state of less enmity and opposition to Christianity, than it was in the first times of the gospel, that we must guard against it as a greater and more dangerous enemy now, than it was in those times.

It is a greater enemy, because it has greater power over Christians by its favours, riches, honours, rewards and protections, than it had by the fire and fury of its persecutions.

It is a more dangerous enemy, by having lost its appearance of enmity. Its outward profession of Christianity makes it no longer considered as an enemy, and therefore the generality of people are easily persuaded, to resign themselves up to be governed and directed by it.

How many consciences are kept at quiet, upon no other foundation, but because they sin under the authority of the Christian world?

How many directions of the Gospel lie by unregarded, and how unconcernedly do particular persons read them, for no other reason, but because they seem unregarded by the Christian world?

How many compliances do people make to the Christian world, without any hesitation, or remorse; which if they had been required of them only by heathens, would have been refused, as contrary to the holiness of Christianity.

* 1 John ii. 16.

Who could be content with seeing how contrary his life is to the *Gospel*, but because he sees, that he lives as the Christian world doth?

Who that reads the Gospel, would want to be persuaded of the necessity of *great self-denial, humility*, and *poverty of spirit*, but that the authority of the world has banished this doctrine of the cross?

There is nothing therefore, that a good Christian ought to be more suspicious of, or more constantly guard against, than the authority of the *Christian world.*

And all the passages of Scripture, which represent the world as contrary to Christianity, which require our separation from it, as from a *Mammon of unrighteousness*, a monster of iniquity, are all to be taken in the same *strict sense*, in relation to the present world.

For the change that the world has undergone, has only altered its methods, but not lessened its power of destroying Religion.

Christians had nothing to fear from the *heathen world*, but the loss of their lives; but the world become a *friend*, makes it difficult for them to *save* their Religion.

Whilst *pride*, *sensuality*, *covetousness*, and *ambition*, had only the authority of the *heathen world*, Christians were thereby made more intent upon the contrary virtues. But when pride, sensuality, covetousness, and ambition, have the authority of the Christian world, then private Christians are in the utmost danger, not only of being shamed out of the practice, but of losing the very notion of the piety of the Gospel.

There is therefore hardly any possibility of saving yourself from the present world, but by considering it as the same *wicked enemy*, to all true holiness, as it is represented in the Scriptures; and by assuring yourself, that it is as dangerous to conform to its *tempers* and *passions*, now it is Christian, as when it was heathen.

For only ask yourself, Is the *piety*, the *humility*, the *sobriety* of the Christian world, the piety, the humility, and sobriety of the Christian spirit? If not, how can you be more undone by any world, than by conforming to that which is Christian?

Need a man do more to make his soul unfit for the mercy of God, than by being *greedy* and *ambitious* of honour? Yet how can a man renounce this temper, without renouncing the spirit and temper of the world, in which you now live.

How can a man be made more incapable of the spirit of Christ, than by a *wrong value* for money; and yet how can he be more wrong in his value of it, than by following the authority of the Christian world?

Nay, in every *order* and *station* of life, whether of *learning* or *business*, either in Church or State, you cannot act up to the spirit of Religion, without renouncing the most *general temper* and *behaviour* of those, who are of the same order and business as yourself.

And though *human prudence* seems to talk mighty wisely about the necessity of avoiding *particularities*, yet he that dares not be so *weak* as to be particular, will be often obliged to avoid the most substantial duties of Christian piety.

These reflections will, I hope, help you to break through those difficulties, and resist those temptations, which the authority and fashion of the world have raised against the practice of *Christian humility*.

Chapter XVIII.

Showing how the education *which men generally receive in their youth, makes the doctrines of humility difficult to be practised. The spirit of a better education, represented in the character of* Paternus.

ANOTHER difficulty in the practice of humility, arises from our education. We are all of us, for the most part corruptly educated, and then committed to take our course in a corrupt world; so that it is no wonder, if examples of great piety are so seldom seen.

Great part of the world are undone, by being born and bred in families that have no Religion; where they are made vicious and irregular, by being like those with whom they first lived.

But this is not the thing I now mean; the education that I here intend, is such as children generally receive from virtuous and sober *parents*, and learned *tutors* and governors.

Had we continued perfect, as God created the first man, perhaps the perfection of our nature had been a sufficient *self-instruction* for everyone. But as *sickness* and *diseases* have created the necessity of *medicines* and *physicians*, so the change and disorder of our rational nature, have introduced the necessity of *education* and *tutors*.

And as the only end of the physician is, to restore nature to

its own state, so the only end of education is, to restore our rational nature to its proper state. Education therefore is to be considered as *reason* borrowed at *second hand*, which is, as far as it can, to supply the loss of *original* perfection. And as physic may justly be called the *art* of restoring health, so education should be considered in no other light, than as the art of recovering to man the use of his reason.

Now as the instruction of every *art* or *science* is founded upon the *discoveries*, the *wisdom*, *experience*, and *maxims* of the several great men that have laboured in it; so *human wisdom*, or *right use* of our reason, which young people should be called to by their education, is nothing else but the *best experience*, and *finest reasonings* of men, that have devoted themselves to the study of wisdom, and the improvement of human nature.

All therefore that *great saints*, and *dying* men, when the fullest of light and conviction, and after the highest improvement of their reason, all that they have said of the necessity of *piety*, of the excellency of *virtue*, of their *duty* to God, of the emptiness of riches, of the vanity of the *world;* all the *sentences, judgments, reasonings*, and maxims of the wisest of philosophers, when in their highest state of wisdom, should constitute the *common lessons* of instruction for youthful minds.

This is the only way to make the *young* and *ignorant* part of the world the better for the *wisdom*, and *knowledge* of the wise and ancient.

An education which is not *wholly* intent upon this, is as much beside the point, as an art of *Physic*, that had little or no regard to the restoration of health.

The youths that attended upon *Pythagoras*, *Socrates*, *Plato*, and *Epictetus*, were thus educated. Their everyday lessons and instructions were so many lectures upon the nature of man, his true *end*, and the right use of his faculties; upon the immortality of the soul, its relation to God, the beauty of virtue, and its agreeableness to the divine nature; upon the dignity of reason, the necessity of temperance, fortitude and generosity, and the shame and folly of indulging our passions.

Now as Christianity has, as it were, new created the *moral* and *religious* world, and set everything that is reasonable, wise, holy, and desirable, in its true point of light; so one would expect, that the education of youth should be as much bettered and amended by Christianity, as the *faith* and *doctrines* of Religion are amended by it.

As it has introduced such a *new state* of things, and so fully informed us of the *nature* of man, the *ends* of his creation, the state of his condition; as it has fixed all our *goods* and *evils*,

taught us the means of purifying our souls, pleasing God, and becoming eternally happy; one might naturally suppose, that every Christian Country abounded with *schools* for the teaching, not only a few questions and answers of a *Catechism*, but for the forming, training, and practising youths in such an outward course of life, as the *highest* precepts, the *strictest* rules, and the *sublimest* doctrines of Christianity require.

An education under *Pythagoras*, or *Socrates*, had no other end, but to teach youth to *think*, *judge*, *act*, and follow such *rules* of life as *Pythagoras* and *Socrates* used.

And is it not as reasonable to suppose, that a Christian education should have no other end, but to teach youth how to think, and judge, and act, and live according to the *strictest laws* of Christianity?

At least, one would suppose, that in all Christian schools, the teaching youth to begin their lives in the *spirit* of Christianity, in such *severity* of behaviour, such *abstinence*, *sobriety*, *humility*, and *devotion*, as Christianity requires, should not only be *more*, but an *hundred times* more regarded, than any, or all things else.

For our education should imitate our *guardian angels*, suggest nothing to our minds but what is *wise* and *holy*; help us to discover and subdue every *vain passion* of our hearts, and every *false judgment* of our minds.

And it is as *sober* and *reasonable*, to expect and require all this benefit of a Christian education, as to require that physic should strengthen all that is right in our nature, and remove that which is *sickly* and *diseased*.

But alas, our modern education is not of this kind.

The *first temper* that we try to awaken in children, is *pride*; as dangerous a passion as that of *lust*. We stir them up to vain thoughts of themselves, and do everything we can, to puff up their minds with a sense of their own abilities.

Whatever way of life we intend them for, we apply to the *fire* and *vanity* of their minds, and exhort them to everything from corrupt motives: We stir them up to action from principles of *strife* and *ambition*, from *glory*, *envy*, and a desire of distinction, that they may excel others, and shine in the eyes of the world.

We repeat and inculcate these motives upon them, till they think it a part of their duty to be *proud*, *envious*, and *vainglorious* of their own accomplishments.

And when we have taught them to scorn to be outdone by any, to bear no *rival*, to thirst after *every instance* of applause, to be content with nothing but the highest distinctions; then we begin to take comfort in them, and promise the world some mighty things from youths of such a glorious spirit.

If children are intended for *holy orders*, we set before them some eminent *orator*, whose *fine* preaching has made him the *admiration* of the age, and carried him through all the *dignities* and *preferments* of the Church.

We encourage them to have these *honours* in their eye, and to expect the reward of their studies from them.

If the youth is intended for a *trade;* we bid him look at all the rich men of the *same trade*, and consider how many now are carried about in their *stately coaches*, who began in the same low degree as he now does. We awaken his ambition, and endeavour to give his mind a *right turn*, by often telling him how very rich such and such a tradesman died.

If he is to be a *lawyer*, then we set great *Counsellors*, Lords *Judges*, and *Chancellors*, before his eyes. We tell him what *fees*, and great *applause* attend fine pleading. We exhort him to take fire at these things, to raise a spirit of emulation in himself, and to be content with nothing less than the highest honours of the *long Robe*.

That this is the nature of our *best education*, is too plain to need any proof; and I believe there are few parents, but would be glad to see these instructions daily given to their children.

And after all this, we complain of the effects of pride; we wonder to see *grown men* acted and governed by *ambition*, *envy*, *scorn*, and a *desire* of glory; not considering that they were all the time of their youth called upon, to all their action and industry upon the same principles.

You teach a child to *scorn* to be outdone, to thirst for *distinction* and *applause;* and is it any wonder that he continues to act all his life in the same manner?

Now if a youth is ever to be so far a Christian, as to govern his heart by the *doctrines* of humility, I would fain know at *what time* he is to begin it; or if he is *ever* to begin it at all, why we train him up in tempers quite contrary to it?

How *dry* and *poor* must the doctrine of humility sound to a youth, that has been spurred up to all his industry by *ambition*, *envy*, *emulation*, and a desire of *glory* and *distinction?* And if he is not to act by these *principles* when he is a *man*, why do we call him to act by them in his *youth?*

Envy is acknowledged by all people to be the most *ungenerous*, *base* and *wicked* passion, that can enter into the heart of man.

And is this a temper to be instilled, nourished and established in the minds of young people?

I know it is said, that it is not *envy*, but *emulation*, that is intended to be awakened in the minds of young men.

But this is vainly said. For when children are taught to bear

no *rival*, and to *scorn* to be outdone by any of their age, they are plainly and directly taught to be *envious*. For it is impossible for anyone to have this *scorn* of being outdone, and this contention with *rivals*, without burning with *envy* against all those that seem to excel him, or get any distinction from him. So that what children are taught is *rank envy*, and only covered with a name of a less odious sound.

Secondly, if *envy* is thus confessedly bad, and it be only *emulation* that is endeavoured to be awakened in children, surely there ought to be *great care* taken, that children may know the one from the other. That they may abominate the one as a great *crime*, whilst they give the other admission into their minds.

But if this were to be attempted, the *fineness* of the distinction betwixt envy and emulation, would show that it was easier to divide them in words, than to separate them in action.

For *emulation*, when it is defined in its best manner, is nothing else but a *refinement* upon envy, or rather the most *plausible part* of that black and venomous passion.

And though it is easy to separate them in the *notion*, yet the most acute *Philosopher*, that understands the art of distinguishing ever so well, if he gives himself up to *emulation*, will certainly find himself *deep* in *envy*.

For *envy* is not an *original* temper, but the natural, necessary, and unavoidable effect of emulation, or a desire of glory.

So that he who establishes the one in the minds of people, necessarily fixes the other there. And there is no other possible way of destroying envy, but by destroying emulation, or a desire of glory. For the one always rises and falls in proportion to the other.

I know it is said in defence of this method of education, that ambition, and a desire of glory, are necessary to excite young people to industry ; and that if we were to press upon them the doctrines of humility, we should deject their minds, and sink them into *dulness* and *idleness*.

But these people who say this, do not consider, that this reason, if it has any strength, is full as strong against pressing the doctrines of humility upon *grown men*, lest we should deject their minds, and sink them into dulness and idleness.

For who does not see, that *middle-aged men* want as much the assistance of pride, ambition, and vain-glory, to spur them up to action and industry, as *children* do ? And it is very certain, that the precepts of humility are more contrary to the designs of such men, and more grievous to their minds, when they are pressed upon them, than they are to the minds of young persons.

This reason therefore that is given, why children should not be

trained up in the principles of true humility, is as good a reason why the same humility should never be required of grown men.

Thirdly, Let those people, who think that children would be spoiled, if they were not thus educated, consider this.

Could they think, that if any children had been educated by our blessed Lord, or his holy Apostles, that their minds would have been sunk into dulness and idleness?

Or could they think, that such children would not have been trained up in the profoundest principles of a strict and true humility? Can they say that our blessed Lord, who was the meekest and humblest man that ever was on earth, was hindered by his humility from being the greatest example of worthy and glorious actions, that ever was done by man?

Can they say that his Apostles, who lived in the humble spirit of their master, did therefore cease to be laborious and active instruments of doing good to all the world?

A few such reflections as these, are sufficient to expose all the poor pretences for an education in pride and ambition.

Paternus lived about *two hundred* years ago; he had but one son, whom he educated himself in his own house. As they were sitting together in the *Garden*, when the child was *ten years* old, *Paternus* thus began to him.

The little time that you have been in the world, my child, you have spent wholly with me; and my love and tenderness to you, has made you look upon me as your only friend and benefactor, and the cause of all the comfort and pleasure that you enjoy: Your heart, I know, would be ready to break with grief, if you thought this was the last day that I should live with you.

But, my child, though you now think yourself mighty happy, because you have hold of my hand, you are now in the hands, and under the tender care of a much greater father and friend than I am, whose love to you is far greater than mine, and from whom you receive such blessings as no mortal can give.

That God whom you have seen me daily worship, whom I daily call upon to bless both you and me, and all mankind, whose wondrous acts are recorded in those Scriptures which you constantly read; that God who created the heavens and the earth, who brought a flood upon the old world, who saved *Noah* in the Ark, who was the God of *Abraham*, *Isaac* and *Jacob*, whom *Job* blessed and praised in the greatest afflictions, who delivered the *Israelites* out of the hands of the *Egyptians*, who was the protector of righteous *Joseph*, *Moses*, *Joshua*, and holy *Daniel*, who sent so many Prophets into the world, who sent his Son Jesus Christ to redeem mankind; this God who has done all these great things, who has created so many millions of men,

who lived and died before you were born, with whom the spirits of good men that are departed this life, now live, whom infinite numbers of Angels now worship in Heaven; this great God who is the creator of worlds, of angels, and men, is your loving father and friend, your good creator and nourisher, from whom, and not from me, you received your being ten years ago, at the time that I planted that little tender *Elm* which you there see.

I myself am not half the age of this *shady Oak*, under which we sit; many of our fathers have sat under its boughs, we have all of us called it ours in our turn, though it stands, and drops its *masters*, as it drops its *leaves*.

You see, my son, this wide and large *Firmament* over our heads, where the *Sun* and *Moon*, and all the *Stars* appear in their turns. If you were to be carried up to any of these bodies at this vast distance from us, you would still discover others, as much above you, as the *Stars* that you see here are above the *Earth*. Were you to go up or down, *East* or *West*, *North* or *South*, you would find the same height without any *top*, and the same depth without any *bottom*.

And yet, my child, so great is God, that all these bodies added together, are but as a *grain* of sand in his sight. And yet you are as much the care of this great God and Father of all *worlds*, and all *spirits*, as if he had no son but you, or there were no creature for him to love and protect but you alone. He numbers the *hairs* of your head, watches over you sleeping and waking, and has preserved you from a thousand dangers, which neither you, nor I, know anything of.

How poor my power is, and how little I am able to do for you, you have often seen. Your late *sickness* has shown you, how little I could do for you in that state; and the frequent pains of your head are plain proofs, that I have no power to remove them.

I can bring you *food* and *medicines*, but have no power to turn them into your relief and nourishment. It is God alone that can do this for you.

Therefore, my child, fear, and worship, and love God. Your eyes indeed cannot yet see him. But every thing you see, are so many marks of his power and presence, and he is nearer to you, than anything that you can see.

Take him for your *Lord*, and *Father*, and *Friend;* look up unto him as the fountain and cause of all the good that you have received through my hands; and reverence me only as the *bearer* and *minister* of God's good things unto you. And he that blessed my father before I was born, will bless you when I am dead.

Your youth and little mind is only yet acquainted with my family, and therefore you think there is no happiness out of it.

But, my child, you belong to a greater Family than mine, you are a young member of the family of this Almighty Father of all Nations, who has created infinite order of Angels, and numberless generations of men, to be fellow-members of one and the same society in Heaven.

You do well to reverence and obey my authority, because God has given me power over you, to bring you up in his fear, and to do for you, as the holy fathers recorded in Scripture did for their children, who are now in rest and peace with God.

I shall in a short time die, and leave you to God, and yourself, and if God forgiveth my sins, I shall go to his Son Jesus Christ, and live amongst Patriarchs and Prophets, Saints and Martyrs, where I shall pray for you, and hope for your safe arrival at the same place.

Therefore, my child, meditate on these great things, and your soul will soon grow great and noble by so meditating upon them.

Let your thoughts often leave these *gardens*, these *fields* and *farms*, to contemplate upon God and Heaven, to consider upon Angels, and the spirits of good men living in light and glory.

As you have been used to look to me in all your actions, and have been afraid to do anything, unless you first knew my will, so let it now be a rule of your life, to look up to God in all your actions, to do everything in his fear, and to abstain from everything that is not according to his will.

Bear him always in your mind, teach your thoughts to reverence him in every place, for there is no place where he is not.

God keepeth a *book* of life, wherein all the actions of all men are written; your name is there, my child, and when you die, this book will be laid open before men and angels, and according as your actions are there found, you will either be received to the happiness of those holy men who have died before you, or be turned away amongst wicked spirits, that are never to see God any more.

Never forget this book, my son, for it is written, it must be opened, you must see it, and you must be tried by it. Strive therefore to fill it with your good deeds, that the handwriting of God may not appear against you.

God, my child, is all *love*, and *wisdom*, and *goodness;* and everything that he has made, and every action that he does, is the effect of them all. Therefore you cannot please God, but so far as you strive to walk in love, wisdom, and goodness. As all wisdom, love, and goodness proceed from God, so nothing but love, wisdom, and goodness, can lead to God.

When you love that which God loves, you act with him, you join yourself to him; and when you love what he dislikes, then you oppose him, and separate yourself from him. This is the true

and the right way ; think what God loves, and do you love it with all your heart.

First of all, my child, worship and adore God, think of him magnificently, speak of him reverently, magnify his providence, adore his power, frequent his service, and pray unto him frequently and constantly.

Next to this, love your neighbour, which is all mankind, with such tenderness and affection, as you love yourself. Think how God loves all mankind, how merciful he is to them, how tender he is of them, how carefully he preserves them, and then strive to love the world, as God loves it.

God would have all men to he happy, therefore do you *will*, and desire the same. All men are great instances of divine love, therefore let all men be instances of your love.

But above all, my son, mark this, never do anything through strife, or envy, or emulation, or vain-glory. Never do anything in order to excel other people, but in order to please God, and because it is his will, that you should do everything in the best manner that you can.

For if it is once a pleasure to you to excel other people, it will by degrees be a pleasure to you, to see other people not so good as yourself.

Banish therefore every thought of *self-pride*, and *self-distinction*, and accustom yourself to rejoice in all the excellencies and perfections of your fellow-creatures, and be as glad to see any of their good actions, as your own.

For as God is as well pleased with their well doings, as with yours, so you ought to desire, that everything that is wise, and holy, and good, may be performed in as high a manner by other people, as by yourself.

Let this therefore be your only motive and spur to all good actions, honest industry, and business, to do everything in as perfect and excellent a manner as you can, for this only reason, because it is pleasing to God, who desires your perfection, and writes all your actions in a book. When I am dead, my son, you will be master of all my estate, which will be a great deal more than the necessities of one family require. Therefore as you are to be charitable to the souls of men, and wish them the same happiness with you in heaven, so be charitable to their bodies, and endeavour to make them as happy as you upon earth.

As God has created all things for the common good of all men, so let that part of them which is fallen to your share, be employed as God would have all employed, for the common good of all.

Do good, my son, first of all to those that most deserve it, but remember to do good to all. The greatest sinners receive daily

instances of God's goodness towards them, he nourishes and preserves them, that they may repent and return to him ; do you therefore imitate God, and think no one too bad to receive your relief and kindness, when you see that he wants it.

I am teaching you *Latin* and *Greek*, not that you should desire to be a great *Critic*, a fine *Poet*, or an eloquent *Orator ;* I would not have your heart feel any of these desires ; for the desire of these accomplishments is a vanity of the mind, and the masters of them are generally vain men. For the desire of anything that is not a real good, lessens the application of the mind after that which is so.

But I teach you these languages, that at proper times you may look into the history of past ages, and learn the methods of God's providence over the world : that reading the writings of the ancient *Sages*, you may see how wisdom and virtue have been the praise of great men of all ages, and fortify your mind by these wise sayings.

Let truth and plainness therefore be the only ornament of your language, and study nothing but how to think of all things as they deserve, to choose everything that is best, to live according to reason and order, and to act in every part of your life in conformity to the will of God.

Study how to fill your heart full of the love of God, and the love of your neighbour, and then be content to be no deeper a scholar, no finer a gentleman, than these tempers will make you. As true Religion is nothing else but simple Nature governed by right reason, so it loves and requires great plainness and simplicity of life. Therefore avoid all superfluous shows of finery and equipage, and let your house be plainly furnished with moderate conveniences. Do not consider what your estate can afford, but what right reason requires.

Let your *dress* be sober, clean, and modest, not to set out the beauty of your person, but to declare the sobriety of your mind, that your outward garb may resemble the inward plainness and simplicity of your heart. For it is highly reasonable, that you should be *one man*, all of a piece, and appear outwardly such as you are inwardly.

As to your *meat* and *drink*, in them observe the *highest rules* of Christian temperance and sobriety ; consider your body only as the servant and minister of your soul ; and only so nourish it, as may best perform an humble and obedient service to it.

But, my son, observe this as a most principal thing, which I shall remember you of as long as I live with you.

Hate and despise all *human glory*, for it is nothing else but human folly. It is the greatest *snare*, and the greatest *betrayer* that you can possibly admit into your heart.

Love humility in all its instances, practise it in all its parts, for it is the noblest state of the soul of man; it will set your heart and affections right towards God, and fill you with every temper that is tender and affectionate towards men.

Let every day therefore be a day of humility, condescend to all the weakness, and infirmities of your fellow-creatures, cover their frailties, love their excellencies, encourage their virtues, relieve their wants, rejoice in their prosperities, compassionate their distress, receive their friendship, overlook their unkindness, forgive their malice, be a servant of servants, and condescend to do the lowest offices to the lowest of mankind.

Aspire after nothing but your own purity and perfection, and have no ambition, but to do everything in so reasonable and religious a manner, that you may be glad that God is everywhere present, and sees and observes all your actions. The greatest trial of humility, is an humble behaviour towards your equals in *age*, *estate*, and *condition* of life. Therefore be careful of all the motions of your heart towards these people. Let all your behaviour towards them be governed by unfeigned love. Have no desire to put any of your equals below you, nor any anger at those that would put themselves above you. If they are proud, they are ill of a very bad distemper, let them therefore have your tender pity; and perhaps your meekness may prove an occasion of their cure. But if your humility should do them no good, it will however be the greatest good that you can do to yourself.

Remember that there is but one man in the world, with whom you are to have perpetual contention, and be always striving to exceed him, and that is yourself.

The time of practising these precepts, my child, will soon be over with you, the world will soon slip through your hands, or rather you will soon slip through it; it seems but the other day since I received these same instructions from my dear Father, that I am now leaving with you. And the God that gave me ears to hear, and a heart to receive what my Father said unto me, will, I hope, give you grace to love and follow the same instructions.

Thus did *Paternus* educate his son.

Can anyone now think that such an education as this, would weaken and deject the minds of young people, and deprive the world of any worthy and reasonable labours?

It is so far from that, that there is nothing so likely to ennoble, and exalt the mind, and prepare it for the most heroical exercise of all virtues.

For who will say, that a love of God, a desire of pleasing him, a love of our neighbour, a love of truth, of reason, and virtue, a contemplation of eternity, and the rewards of piety, are not

stronger motives to great and good actions, than a little uncertain popular praise.

On the other hand, there is nothing in reality that more weakens the mind, and reduces it to meanness and slavery, nothing that makes it less master of its own actions, or less capable of following reason, than a love of praise and honour.

For as praise and honour are often given to *things* and *persons*, where they are not due, as that is generally most praised and honoured, that most gratifies the *humours*, *fashions*, and vicious *tempers* of the world; so he that acts upon the desire of praise and applause, must part with every other principle; he must say *black* is *white*, put *bitter* for *sweet*, and *sweet* for *bitter*, and do the meanest, basest things, in order to be applauded.

For in a corrupt world, as this is, worthy actions are only to be supported by their own worth, where instead of being praised and honoured, they are most often reproached, and persecuted.

So that to educate children upon a motive of *emulation*, or a desire of *glory*, in a world where glory itself is *false*, and most commonly given *wrong*, is to destroy the natural integrity and fortitude of their minds, and give them a *bias*, which will oftener carry them to base and mean, than great and worthy actions.

Chapter XIX.

Showing how the method of educating daughters, *makes it difficult for them to enter into the spirit of Christian humility. How miserably they are injured and abused by such an education. The spirit of a better education, represented in the character of* Eusebia.

THAT turn of mind which is taught and encouraged in the education of *daughters*, makes it exceeding difficult for them to enter into such a sense and practice of humility, as the spirit of Christianity requires.

The right education of this *sex*, is of the utmost importance to human life. There is nothing that is more desirable for the common good of all the world. For though *women* do not carry

on the *trade* and *business* of the world, yet as they are *mothers*, and *mistresses* of families, that have for some time the care of the education of their children of both sorts, they are entrusted with that which is of the greatest consequence to human life. For this reason, *good* or *bad* women are likely to do as much good or harm in the world, as good or bad men in the greatest business of life.

For as the *health* and *strength*, or *weakness* of our bodies, is very much owing to *their methods* of treating us when we were young; so the *soundness* or *folly* of our minds, are not less owing to those *first tempers* and ways of thinking, which we eagerly received from the *love*, *tenderness*, *authority*, and constant *conversation* of our mothers.

As we call our first language our *mother-tongue*, so we may as justly call our first tempers our *mother-tempers*; and perhaps it may be found more easy to forget the *language*, than to part entirely with those *tempers* which we learnt in the *nursery*.

It is therefore much to be lamented, that this *sex*, on whom so much depends, who have the first forming both of our *bodies* and our *minds*, are not only educated in *pride*, but in the *silliest* and most *contemptible* part of it.

They are not indeed suffered to dispute with us the proud *prizes* of *arts* and *sciences*, of *learning* and *eloquence*, in which I have much suspicion they would *often* prove our superiors; but we turn them over to the study of *beauty* and *dress*, and the whole world conspires to make them think of nothing else. *Fathers* and *mothers*, *friends*, and *relations*, seem to have no other wish towards the *little girl*, but that she may have a *fair skin*, a *fine shape*, *dress well*, and *dance* to admiration.

Now if a fondness for our *persons*, a desire of *beauty*, a love of *dress*, be a part of pride (as surely it is a most contemptible part of it) the first step towards a *woman's humility*, seems to require a *repentance* of her education.

For it must be owned, that, generally speaking, good parents are never more fond of their daughters, than when they see them *too fond* of themselves, and *dressed* in such a manner, as is a great reproach to the gravity and sobriety of the Christian life.

And what makes this matter still more to be lamented, is this, That women are not only spoiled by this education, but we spoil that *part* of the world, which would otherwise furnish *most instances* of an eminent and exalted piety.

For I believe it may be affirmed, that for the most part there is a *finer sense*, a *clearer mind*, a *readier apprehension*, and *gentler dispositions* in that *sex*, than in the other.

All which tempers, if they were truly improved by *proper*

studies, and *sober* methods of education, would in all probability carry them to greater heights of piety, than are to be found amongst the generality of men.

For this reason, I speak to this matter with so much openness and plainness, because it is much to be lamented, that persons so *naturally* qualified to be great examples of *piety*, should by an erroneous education, be made *poor* and *gaudy* spectacles of the greatest vanity.

The *Church* has formerly had *eminent saints* in that sex, and it may reasonably be thought, that it is purely owing to their *poor* and *vain* education, that this honour of their sex is for the *most part* confined to *former* ages.

The corruption of the world indulges them in great vanity, and mankind seem to consider them in no other view, than as so many *painted idols*, that are to allure and gratify their passions; so that if many women are *vain*, *light*, *gewgaw* creatures, they have this to excuse themselves, that they are not only such as their *education* has made them, but such as the *generality* of the world *allows* them to be.

But then they should consider, that the *friends* to their *vanity* are no friends of theirs; they should consider, that they are to live for *themselves*, that they have as great a share in the *rational nature* as men have; that they have as much *reason* to pretend, and as much *necessity* to aspire after the *highest accomplishments* of a Christian and solid virtue, as the *gravest* and *wisest* among Christian *Philosophers*.

They should consider, that they are *abused* and *injured*, and *betrayed* from their *only perfection*, whenever they are taught, that anything is an *ornament* in them, that is not an ornament in the *wisest* amongst mankind.

It is generally said, that *women* are naturally of *little* and *vain minds;* but this I look upon to be as *false* and *unreasonable*, as to say, that *butchers* are naturally *cruel;* for as their cruelty is not owing to their *nature*, but to their *way* of life, which has changed their nature; so whatever *littleness* and *vanity* is to be observed in the minds of women, it is like the cruelty of *butchers*, a temper that is wrought into them by that life which they are *taught* and *accustomed* to lead.

At least thus much must be said, that we cannot charge anything upon their *nature*, till we take care that it is not *perverted* by their education.

And on the other hand, if it were true that they were thus naturally vain and light, then how much more blamable is that education, which seems contrived to *strengthen* and *increase* this folly and weakness of their minds?

For if it were a virtue in a woman to be proud and vain in herself, we could hardly take better means to raise this passion in her, than those that are now used in her education.

Matilda is a fine woman, of good *breeding*, great *sense*, and much *religion*. She has three daughters that are educated by herself. She will not trust them with anyone else, or at any *school*, for fear they should learn anything ill. She stays with the *dancing-master* all the time he is with them, because she will hear everything that is said to them. She has heard them read the Scriptures so often, that they can repeat great part of it without book: And there is scarce a good book of *devotion*, but you may find it in their *closets*.

Had *Matilda* lived in the first ages of Christianity, when it was practised in the *fulness* and *plainness* of its doctrines, she had in all probability been one of its greatest saints.

But as she was born in corrupt times, where she wants examples of Christian perfection, and hardly ever saw a piety higher than her own; so she has many defects, and communicates them all to her daughters.

Matilda never was *meanly* dressed in her life; and nothing pleases her in *dress*, but that which is very *rich* and *beautiful* to the eye.

Her daughters see her great zeal for religion, but then they see an equal earnestness for all sorts of *finery*. They see she is not negligent of her *devotion*, but then they see her more careful to preserve her *complexion*, and to prevent those changes, which time and age threaten her with.

They are afraid to meet her, if they have missed the *Church;* but then they are more afraid to see her, if they are not *laced* as *strait* as they can possibly be.

She often shows them her *own picture*, which was taken when their father fell in love with her. She tells them, how *distracted* he was with passion at the *first sight* of her, and that she had never had so *fine a complexion*, but for the diligence of her good mother, who took exceeding care of it.

Matilda is so intent upon all the arts of improving their *dress*, that she has some *new fancy* almost every day, and leaves no ornament untried, from the richest *jewel* to the poorest *flower*. She is so nice and critical in her judgment, so sensible of the smallest error, that the maid is often forced to dress and undress her daughters three or four times in a day, before she can be satisfied with it.

As to the *patching*, she reserves that to herself; for, she says, if they are not stuck on with judgment, they are rather a prejudice, than an advantage to the *face*.

The children see so plainly the *temper* of their mother, that they even affect to be *more pleased* with dress, and to be more fond of every little ornament, than they really are, merely to gain her favour.

They saw their eldest sister once brought to her *tears*, and her *perverseness* severely reprimanded, for presuming to say, that she thought it was better to cover the *neck*, than to go so *far naked* as the modern dress requires.

She stints them in their *meals*, and is very scrupulous of what they eat and drink, and tells them how many *fine shapes* she has seen spoiled in her time, for want of such care. If a *pimple* rises in their faces, she is in a great fright, and they themselves are as afraid to see her with it, as if they had committed some great sin.

Whenever they begin to look too *sanguine* and *healthful*, she calls in the assistance of the *doctor;* and if *physic*, or *issues*, will keep the complexion from inclining to *coarse* or *ruddy*, she thinks them well employed.

By this means they are *poor*, *pale*, *sickly*, *infirm* creatures, *vapoured* through want of spirits, *crying* at the smallest accidents, *swooning* away at anything that frights them, and hardly able to bear the *weight* of their best clothes.

The eldest daughter lived as long as she could under this discipline, and died in the twentieth year of her age.

When her body was opened, it appeared that her *ribs* had grown into her *liver*, and that her other *entrails* were much hurt, by being *crushed* together with her *stays*, which her mother had ordered to be twitched so strait, that it often brought tears into her eyes, whilst the maid was dressing her.

Her youngest daughter is run away with a *gamester*, a man of great beauty, who in *dressing* and *dancing* has no superior.

Matilda says, she should die with grief at this accident, but that her *conscience* tells her, she has contributed nothing to it herself. She appeals to their *closets*, to their books of devotion, to testify what care she has taken, to establish her children in a life of solid piety and devotion.

Now though I do not intend to say, that no daughters are brought up in a *better way* than this, for I hope there are many that are: yet thus much I believe may be said, that the much greater part of them, are not brought up so well, or accustomed to so much Religion, as in the present instance.

Their minds are turned as much to the care of their beauty and dress, and the indulgence of vain desires, as in the present case, without having such rules of devotion to stand against it. So that if *solid* piety, *humility*, and a *sober sense* of themselves, is

much wanted in that sex, it is the plain and natural consequence of a vain and corrupt education.

And if they are often too ready to receive the first *fops*, *beaux*, and fine *dancers*, for their husbands; it is no wonder they should like that in men, which they have been taught to admire in themselves.

And if they are often seen to lose that little Religion they were taught in their youth, it is no more to be wondered at, than to see a *little flower* choked and killed amongst *rank weeds*.

For *personal* pride, and *affectation*, a *delight* in beauty, and *fondness* of finery, are tempers that must either kill all Religion in the soul, or be themselves killed by it; they can no more thrive together, than *health* and *sickness*.

Some people that judge hastily, will perhaps here say, that I am exercising too great a severity against the sex.

But more reasonable persons will easily observe, that I entirely spare the *sex*, and only arraign their *education;* that I not only spare them, but plead their *interest*, assert their *honour*, set forth their *perfections*, commend their *natural* tempers, and only condemn that *education*, which is so *injurious*, to their interests, so *debases* their honour, and *deprives* them of the benefit of their *excellent* natures and tempers.

Their education, I profess, I cannot spare; but the only reason is, because it is their *greatest enemy*, because it deprives the world of so many *blessings*, and the Church of so many *saints*, as might reasonably be expected from persons, so formed by their natural tempers to all goodness and tenderness, and so fitted by the clearness and brightness of their minds, to contemplate, love, and admire everything that is holy, virtuous, and divine.

If it should here be said, that I even charge *too high* upon their *education*, and that they are not so *much* hurt by it, as I imagine:

It may be answered, that though I do not pretend to state the *exact degree* of mischief that is done by it, yet its plain and natural tendency to do no harm, is sufficient to justify the most *absolute* condemnation of it.

But if anyone would know, how *generally* women are hurt by this education; if he imagines there may be no personal pride, or vain fondness of themselves, in those that are *patched* and *dressed* out with so much glitter of *art* and *ornament:*

Let him only make the following experiment wherever he pleases.

Let him only acquaint any such woman with his opinion of her: I do not mean that he should tell her to her face, or do it

in any rude public manner; but let him contrive the most *civil*, *secret*, *friendly* way that he can think of, only to let her know his opinion, that he thinks she is neither *handsome*, nor *dresses* well, nor *becomes* her finery; and I dare say, he will find there are but very few *fine dressed* women that will like him never the worse for his *bare opinion*, though known to none but themselves; and that he will not be long without seeing the *effects* of her resentment.

But if such an experiment would show him, that there are but few such women that could bear with his *friendship*, after they knew he had such an opinion of them, surely it is time to complain of, and accuse that *education*, which so *generally* corrupts their hearts.

For though it is hard to judge of the hearts of people, yet where they *declare* their *resentment*, and *uneasiness* at anything, there they pass the judgment upon themselves. If a woman cannot *forgive* a man who thinks she has no *beauty*, nor any *ornament* from her dress, there she *infallibly* discovers the *state* of her own heart, and is condemned by *her own*, and not another's judgment.

For we never are *angry* at others, but when their opinions of us are contrary to that which we have of ourselves.

A man that makes no *pretences* to scholarship, is never angry at those that do not take him to be a *scholar;* so if a woman had no *opinion* of her own *person* and *dress*, she would never be *angry* at those, who are of the *same opinion* with herself.

So that the general bad effects of this education, are too much known to admit of any reasonable doubt.

But how possible it is to bring up daughters in a more excellent way, let the following character declare.

Eusebia is a pious widow, well born, and well bred, and has a good estate for five daughters, whom she brings up as one entrusted by God, to fit five virgins for the kingdom of Heaven. Her family has the same regulation as a *religious house*, and all its orders tend to the support of a constant regular devotion.

She, her *daughters*, and her *maids*, meet together at all the *hours of prayer* in the day, and chant Psalms, and other devotions, and spend the rest of their time in such good works, and innocent diversions, as render them fit to return to their *Psalms* and *Prayers*.

She loves them as her spiritual children, and they reverence her as their spiritual mother, with an affection far above that of the fondest friends.

She has divided part of her estate amongst them, that every one may be charitable out of their own stock, and each

of them take it in their turns to provide for the *poor* and *sick* of the Parish.

Eusebia brings them up to all kinds of labour that are proper for women, as *sewing*, *knitting*, *spinning*, and all other parts of *housewifery;* not for their *amusement*, but that they may be serviceable to themselves and others, and be saved from those temptations which attend an idle life.

She tells them, she had rather see them reduced to the necessity of maintaining themselves by their own work, than to have riches to excuse themselves from labour. For though, says she, you may be able to assist the poor without your labour, yet by your labour you will be able to assist them more.

If *Eusebia* has lived as free from sin as it is possible for human nature, it is because she is always watching and guarding against *all instances* of pride. And if her virtues are stronger and higher than other people's, it is because they are all founded in a deep *humility*.

My children, says she, when your father died, I was much pitied by my friends, as having all the care of a family, and the management of an estate fallen upon me.

But my own grief was founded upon another principle; I was grieved to see myself deprived of so faithful a friend, and that such an eminent example of Christian virtues, should be taken from the eyes of his children, before they were of an age to love and follow it.

But as to worldly cares, which my friends thought so heavy upon me, they are most of them of our own making, and fall away as soon as we *know ourselves*.

If a person in a *dream* is disturbed with strange appearances, his trouble is over as soon as he is *awake*, and sees that it was the folly of a dream.

Now when a right knowledge of ourselves enters into our minds, it makes as great change in all our thoughts and apprehensions, as when we *awake* from the *wanderings* of a dream.

We acknowledge a man to be *mad*, or *melancholy*, who fancies himself to be a *glass*, and so is afraid of stirring; or taking himself to be *wax*, dare not let the *Sun* shine upon him.

But, my children, there are things in the world which pass for *wisdom*, *politeness*, *grandeur*, *happiness*, and *fine breeding*, which show as great *ignorance* of ourselves, and might as justly pass for *thorough madness*, as when a man fancies himself to be *glass*, or *ice*.

A woman that dares not appear in the world without *fine clothes*, that thinks it a happiness to have a face *finely coloured*, to have a skin *delicately fair*, that had rather die than be reduced

to poverty, and be forced to work for a poor maintenance, is as ignorant of herself to the full, as he that fancies himself to be *glass*.

For this reason, all my discourse with you, has been to acquaint you with yourselves, and to accustom you to such books and devotions, as may best instruct you in this greatest of all knowledge.

You would think it hard, not to know the family into which you were born, what ancestors you were descended from, and what estate was to come to you. But, my children, you may know all this with exactness, and yet be as ignorant of yourselves, as he that takes himself to be *wax*.

For though you were all of you born of my body, and bear your father's name, yet you are all of you *pure spirits*. I do not mean that you have not bodies that want *meat* and *drink*, and *sleep*, and *clothing*, but that *all* that deserves to be called *you*, is nothing else but *spirit*. A being spiritual and rational in its nature, that is as contrary to all fleshly or corporeal beings, as *life* is contrary to *death;* that is made in the image of God, to live for ever, never to cease any more, but to enjoy *life*, and *reason*, and *knowledge*, and *happiness* in the presence of God, and the society of Angels, and glorious Spirits, to all eternity.

Everything that you call yours, besides this spirit, is but like your *clothing;* something that is only to be used for awhile, and then to *end*, and *die*, and *wear away*, and to signify no more to you, than the *clothing* and *bodies* of other people.

But, my children, you are not only in this manner *spirits*, but you are *fallen* spirits, that began your life in a state of corruption and disorder, full of tempers and passions, that blind and darken the reason of your mind, and incline you to that which is hurtful.

Your bodies are not only *poor* and *perishing* like your clothes, but they are like *infected clothes*, that fill you with ill diseases and distempers, which oppress the soul with sickly appetites, and vain cravings.

So that all of us are like two beings, that have, as it were, two hearts within us; with the one we see, and taste, and admire reason, purity and holiness; with the other we incline to pride, and vanity, and sensual delights.

This internal war we always feel within us more or less; and if you would know the one thing necessary to all the world, it is this: to preserve and perfect all that is *rational*, *holy* and *divine* in our nature, and to mortify, remove, and destroy all that *vanity*, *pride*, and *sensuality*, which springs from the corruption of our state.

Could you think, my children, when you look at the world, and see what *customs*, and *fashions*, and *pleasures*, and *troubles*, and *projects*, and *tempers*, employ the hearts and time of mankind, that things were thus, as I have told you?

But do not you be affected at these things, the world is in a great *dream*, and but few people are awake in it.

We fancy that we fall into darkness, when we die; but alas, we are most of us in the dark till then; and the eyes of our souls only then begin to see, when our bodily eyes are closing.

You see then your state, my children; you are to honour, improve, and perfect the spirit that is within you, you are to prepare it for the kingdom of Heaven, to nourish it with the love of God, and of virtue, to adorn it with good works, and to make it as holy and heavenly as you can. You are to preserve it from the errors and vanities of the world; to save it from the corruptions of the body, from those false delights, and sensual tempers, which the body tempts it with.

You are to nourish your spirits with pious readings, and holy meditations, with watchings, fastings, and prayers, that you may taste, and relish, and desire that eternal state, which is to begin when this life ends.

As to your bodies, you are to consider them as *poor*, *perishing* things, that are sickly and corrupt at present, and will soon drop into common dust. You are to watch over them as *enemies*, that are always trying to tempt and betray you, and so never follow their advice and counsel; you are to consider them as the *place* and *habitation* of your souls, and so keep them *pure* and *clean*, and *decent;* you are to consider them as the servants and instruments of action, and so give them *food*, and *rest*, *and raiment*, that they may be strong and healthful to do the duties of a charitable, useful, pious life.

Whilst you live thus, you live like yourselves; and whenever you have less regard to your souls, or more regard to your bodies, than this comes to; whenever you are more intent upon adorning your persons, than upon the perfecting of your souls, you are much more beside yourselves, than he, that had rather have a *laced coat*, than an healthful body.

For this reason, my children, I have taught you nothing that was dangerous for you to learn; I have kept you from everything that might betray you into *weakness* and *folly;* or make you think anything fine, but a *fine mind;* anything happy but the favour of God; or anything desirable, but to do all the good you possibly can.

Instead of the vain, immodest entertainment of *Plays*, and *Operas*, I have taught you to delight in visiting the *sick* and

poor. What *music*, and *dancing*, and *diversions* are to many in the world, that prayers and devotions, and Psalms are to you. Your hands have not been employed in plaiting the hair, and adorning your persons; but in making clothes for the naked. You have not wasted your fortunes upon yourselves, but have added your labour to them, for to do more good to other people.

Instead of forced *shapes*, *patched faces*, *genteel airs*, and *affected motions*, I have taught you to *conceal* your bodies with *modest garments*, and let the world have nothing to view of you, but the *plainness*, the *sincerity*, and *humility* of all your behaviour.

You know, my children, the *high perfection*, and the *great rewards* of virginity; you know how it frees from worldly cares and troubles, and furnishes means and opportunities of higher advancements in a divine life; therefore love, and esteem, and honour virginity: bless God for all that glorious company of holy virgins, that from the beginning of Christianity have, in the several ages of the Church, renounced the cares and pleasures of matrimony, to be perpetual examples of solitude, contemplation, and prayer.

But as everyone has their proper gift from God, as I look upon you all to be so many great blessings of a married state; so I leave it to your choice, either to do as I have done, or to aspire after higher degrees of perfection in a virgin state of life.

I desire nothing, I press nothing upon you, but to make the most of human life, and to aspire after perfection in whatever state of life you choose.

Never therefore consider yourselves as persons that are to be *seen*, *admired*, and *courted* by men; but as *poor sinners*, that are to save yourselves from the vanities and follies of a miserable world, by *humility*, *devotion*, and *self-denial*. Learn to live for your own sakes, and the service of God; and let nothing in the world be of any value with you, but that which you can turn into a service to God, and a means of your future happiness.

Consider often how powerfully you are called to a virtuous life, and what great and glorious things God has done for you, to make you in love with everything that can promote his glory.

Think upon the vanity and shortness of human life, and let death and eternity be often in your minds; for these thoughts will strengthen and exalt your minds, make you wise and judicious, and truly sensible of the littleness of all human things.

Think of the happiness of prophets and apostles, saints and martyrs, who are now rejoicing in the presence of God, and see

themselves possessors of eternal glory. And then think how desirable a thing it is, to watch and pray, and do good as they did, that when you die you may have your lot amongst them.

Whether married therefore, or unmarried, consider yourselves as mothers and sisters, as friends and relations to all that want your assistance; and never allow yourselves to be idle, whilst others are in want of anything that your hands can make for them.

This useful, charitable, humble employment of yourselves, is what I recommend to you with great earnestness, as being a substantial part of a wise and pious life. And besides the good you will thereby do to other people, every virtue of your own heart will be very much improved by it.

For next to *reading*, *meditation*, and *prayer*, there is nothing that so secures our hearts from foolish passions, nothing that preserves so holy and wise a frame of mind, as some *useful*, *humble* employment of ourselves.

Never therefore consider your labour as an *amusement*, that is to get rid of your time, and so may be as trifling as you please; but consider it as something that is to be serviceable to yourselves and others, that is to serve some sober ends of life, to save and redeem your time, and make it turn to your account when the works of all people shall be tried by fire.

When you were little, I left you to little amusements, to please yourselves in any things that were free from harm; but as you are now grown up to a knowledge of God, and yourselves; as your minds are now acquainted with the worth and value of virtue, and exalted with the great doctrines of Religion, you are now to do nothing as children, but despise everything that is poor, or vain, and impertinent; you are now to make the labours of your hands suitable to the piety of your hearts, and employ yourselves for the same ends, and with the same spirit, as you *watch* and *pray*.

For if there is any good to be done by your labour, if you can possibly employ yourselves usefully to other people, how silly is it, how contrary to the wisdom of Religion, to make that a *mere amusement*, which might as easily be made an exercise of the *greatest charity?*

What would you think of the wisdom of him, that should employ his time in distilling of waters, and making liquors which nobody could use, merely to amuse himself with the variety of their colour and clearness, when with less labour and expense he might satisfy the wants of those, who have nothing to drink?

Yet he would be as wisely employed, as those that are amusing

themselves with such tedious works, as they neither need, nor hardly know how to use when they are finished; when with less labour and expense they might be doing as much good, as he that is *clothing* the naked, or *visiting* the sick.

Be glad therefore to know the wants of the poorest people, and let your hands be employed in making such *mean* and *ordinary* things for them, as their necessities require. But thus making your labour a gift and service to the poor, your ordinary work will be changed into a holy service, and made as acceptable to God, as your devotions.

And charity is the greatest of all virtues, as it always was the *chief temper* of the greatest saints; so nothing can make your own charity more amiable in the sight of God, than this method of adding your labour to it.

The *humility* also of this employment will be as beneficial to you, as the charity of it. It will keep you from all vain and proud thoughts of your own state and distinction in life, and from treating the poor as creatures of a different species. By accustoming yourselves to this labour and service for the poor, as the *representatives* of Jesus Christ, you will soon find your heart softened into the greatest meekness, and lowliness towards them. You will reverence their estate and condition, think it an *honour* to serve them, and never be so pleased with yourself, as when you are *most humbly* employed in their service.

This will make you true disciples of your meek Lord and Master, 'who came into the world, not to be ministered unto, 'but to minister;' and though he was Lord of all, and amongst the creatures of his own making, yet was amongst them, 'as one 'that serveth.'

Christianity has then had its most glorious effects upon your hearts, when it has thus changed your spirit, removed all the pride of life from you, and made you delight in humbling yourselves, beneath the lowest of all your fellow-creatures.

Live therefore, my children, as you have begun your lives, in humble labour for the good of others; and let ceremonious visits, and vain acquaintances, have as little of your time as you possibly can. Contract no foolish friendships, or vain fondnesses for particular persons; but love them most, that most turn your love towards God, and your compassion towards all the world.

But above all, avoid the conversation of *fine-bred fops* and *beaux*, and hate nothing more than the idle discourse, the flattery, and compliments of that sort of men; for they are the *shame* of their own *sex*, and ought to be the *abhorrence* of yours.

When you go abroad, let humility, modesty, and a decent

carriage, be all the *state* that you take upon you ; and let tenderness, compassion, and good nature, be all the *fine breeding* that you show in any place.

If evil *speaking*, *scandal*, or *backbiting*, be the conversation where you happen to be, keep your heart and your tongue to yourself ; be as much grieved, as if you were amongst cursing and swearing, and retire as soon as you can.

Though you intend to marry, yet let the time never come, till you find a man that has those perfections, which you have been labouring after yourselves ; who is likely to be a friend to all your virtues, and with whom it is better to live, than to want the benefit of his example.

Love *poverty*, and reverence *poor people ;* as for many reasons, so particularly for this, because our blessed Saviour was one of the number, and because you may make them all so many *friends* and *advocates* with God for you.

Visit and converse with them frequently ; you will often find *simplicity*, *innocence*, *patience*, *fortitude*, and great piety among them ; and where they are not so, your good example may amend them.

Rejoice at every opportunity of doing an humble action, and exercising the meekness of your minds, whether it be, as the Scripture expresses it, in *washing the saints' feet*, that is, in waiting upon, and serving those that are below you ; or in bearing with the haughtiness and ill-manners of those that are your equals, or above you. For there is nothing better than humility ; it is the fruitful soil of all virtues ; and everything that is kind and good, naturally grows from it.

Therefore, my children, pray for, and practise humility, and reject everything in *dress*, or *carriage*, or *conversation*, that has any appearance of pride.

Strive to do everything that is praiseworthy, but do nothing in order to be praised ; nor think of any reward, for all your labours of love and virtue, till Christ cometh with all his holy angels.

And above all, my children, have a care of vain and proud thoughts of your own virtues. For as soon as ever people live different from the common way of the world, and despise its vanities, the devil represents to their minds the height of their own perfections ; and is content they should excel in good works, provided that he can but make them proud of them.

Therefore watch over your virtues with a jealous eye, and reject every vain thought, as you would reject the most wicked imaginations ; and think what a loss it would be to you, to have the fruit of all your good works, devoured by the vanity of your own minds.

Never therefore allow yourselves to despise those, who do not follow your rules of life ; but force your hearts to love them, and pray to God for them ; and let *humility* be always *whispering* it into your ears, that you yourselves will fall from those rules to-morrow, if God should leave you to your own strength and wisdom.

When, therefore, you have spent days and weeks well, do not suffer your hearts to contemplate anything as your own, but give all the glory to the goodness of God, who has carried you through such rules of holy living, as you were not able to observe by your own strength ; and take care to begin the next day, not as proficients in virtue, that can do great matters, but as *poor beginners*, that want the daily assistance of God, to save you from the *grossest sins*.

Your dear father was an humble, watchful, pious, wise man. Whilst his sickness would suffer him to talk with me, his discourse was chiefly about your education. He knew the benefits of humility, he saw the ruins which pride made in our sex ; and therefore he conjured me with the tenderest expressions, to renounce the *fashionable ways* of educating daughters in *pride* and *softness*, in the care of their *beauty* and *dress ;* and to bring you all up in the *plainest, simplest* instances of an humble, holy, and industrious life.

He taught me an *admirable rule* of humility, which he practised all the days of his life ; which was this ; to let no morning pass, without thinking upon some *frailty* and *infirmity* of our own, that may put us to *confusion*, make us *blush inwardly*, and entertain a mean opinion of ourselves.

Think therefore, my children, that the soul of your good father, who is now with God, speaks to you through my mouth ; and let the double desire of your father, who is gone, and of me, who am with you, prevail upon you to love God, to study your own perfection, to practise humility, and with innocent labour and charity, to do all the good that you can to all your fellow-creatures, till God calls you to another life.

Thus did the pious widow educate her daughters.

The spirit of this education speaks so plainly for itself, that, I hope, I need say nothing in its justification. If we could see it in life, as well as read of it in books, the world would soon find the happy effects of it.

A *daughter* thus educated, would be a blessing to any family that she came into ; a fit companion for a wise man, and make him happy in the government of his family, and the education of his children.

And she that either was not inclined, or could not dispose of

herself well in marriage, would know how to live to great and excellent ends in a state of virginity.

A very ordinary knowledge of the *spirit* of Christianity, seems to be enough to convince us, that no education can be of true advantage to young women, but that which trains them up in *humble industry*, in *great plainness* of life, in *exact modesty* of *dress*, *manners*, and *carriage*, and in *strict devotion*. For what should a Christian woman be, but a *plain*, *unaffected*, *modest*, *humble* creature, averse to everything in her *dress* and *carriage*, that can draw the eyes of beholders, or gratify the passions of lewd and amorous persons?

How great a stranger must he be to the Gospel, who does not know, that it requires this to be the spirit of a pious woman?

Our blessed Saviour saith, 'Whosoever looketh upon a woman 'to lust after her, hath already committed adultery with her in 'his heart.'*

Need an education, which turns women's minds to the *arts* and *ornaments* of dress and beauty, be more strongly condemned, than by these words? For surely, if the eye is so easily and dangerously betrayed, every *art* and *ornament* is sufficiently condemned, that naturally tends to betray it.

And how can a woman of piety more justly abhor and avoid anything, than that which makes her person more a *snare* and *temptation* to other people? If *lust*, and *wanton eyes* are the death of the soul, can any women think themselves innocent, who with naked breasts, patched faces, and every ornament of dress, invite the eye to offend?

And as there is no pretence for innocence in such a behaviour, so neither can they tell how to set any bounds to their guilt. For as they can never know how much, or how often they have occasioned sin in other people, so they can never know how much guilt will be placed to their own account.

This, one would think, should sufficiently deter every pious woman from everything, that might render her the occasion of loose passions in other people.

St. *Paul*, speaking of a thing entirely *innocent*, reasons after this manner: 'But take heed lest by any means this liberty of 'yours, become a stumbling-block to those that are weak.— 'And through thy knowledge thy weak brother perish, for whom 'Christ died. But when ye sin so against the brethren, and 'wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ. Wherefore, 'if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the 'world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend.'†

* Matt. v. 28

† 1 Cor. viii. 9, 11.

Now if this is the spirit of Christianity; if it requires us to abstain from things thus lawful, innocent, and useful, when there is any danger of betraying our weak brethren into any error thereby: Surely it cannot be reckoned too *nice* or *needless* a point of conscience, for women to avoid such things, as are neither innocent nor useful, but *naturally* tend to corrupt their own hearts, and raise ill passions in other people.

Surely every woman of Christian piety ought to say, in the spirit of the Apostle, if *patching* and *paint*, or any *vain adorning* of my person, be a natural means of making weak, unwary eyes to offend, I will renounce all these arts as long as I live, lest I should make my fellow-creatures to offend.

I shall now leave this subject of *humility;* having said enough, as I hope, to recommend the necessity of making it the constant, chief subject of your devotion, at this hour of prayer.

I have considered the nature and necessity of humility, and its great importance to a religious life. I have shown you how many difficulties are formed against it from our natural tempers, the spirit of the world, and the common education of both sexes.

These considerations will, I hope, instruct you how to form your prayers for it to the best advantage; and teach you the necessity of letting no day pass, without a serious, earnest application to God, for the *whole spirit* of humility. Fervently beseeching him to fill every part of your soul with it, to make it the ruling, constant habit of your mind, that you may not only feel it, but feel all your other tempers arising from it; that you may have no thoughts, no desires, no designs, but such as are the true fruits of an humble, meek, and lowly heart.

That you may always appear poor, and little, and mean in your own eyes, and fully content that others should have the same opinion of you.

That the whole *course* of your life, your *expense*, your *house*, your *dress*, your manner of *eating*, *drinking*, *conversing*, and doing *everything*, may be so many continual proofs of the true, unfeigned humility of your heart.

That you may look for nothing, claim nothing, resent nothing; that you may go through all the actions and accidents of life, calmly and quietly, as in the presence of God, looking wholly unto him, acting wholly for him; neither seeking vain applause, nor resenting neglects, or affronts, but doing and receiving everything in the meek and lowly spirit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Chapter XX.

Recommending Devotion at twelve o'Clock, called in Scripture the sixth hour *of the day. This frequency of Devotion equally desirable by all orders of people.* Universal love *is here recommended to be the subject of prayer at this hour. Of intercession, as an act of universal love.*

IT will perhaps be thought by some people, that these hours of prayer come *too thick;* that they can only be observed by people of great leisure, and ought not to be *pressed* upon the generality of men, who have the *cares* of families, *trades* and *employments;* nor upon the *gentry*, whose *state* and *figure* in the world cannot admit of this frequency of Devotion. And that it is only fit for *Monasteries* and *Nunneries*, or such people as have no more to do in the world than they have.

To this it is answered,

First, that this method of Devotion is not pressed upon any sort of people, as *absolutely necessary*, but recommended to *all people*, as the *best*, the *happiest*, and most *perfect* way of life.

And if a great and exemplary Devotion, is as much the greatest happiness and perfection of a *Merchant*, a *Soldier*, or a man of *Quality*, as it is the greatest happiness and perfection of the most *retired contemplative* life, then it is as proper to recommend it without any *abatements* to one order of men, as to another. Because happiness and perfection are of the same worth and value to all people.

The *Gentleman* and *Tradesman* may, and must spend much of their time differently from the pious *Monk* in the *cloister*, or the contemplative *Hermit* in the *desert:* But then, as the *Monk* and *Hermit* lose the ends of retirement, unless they make it all serviceable to Devotion; so the *Gentleman* and *Merchant* fail of the greatest ends of a *social life*, and live to their loss in the world, unless Devotion be their *chief* and *governing* temper.

It is certainly very *honest* and *creditable* for people to engage in *trades* and *employments;* it is reasonable for *Gentlemen* to manage well their *estates* and *families*, and take such recreations

as are proper to their state. But then every Gentleman and Tradesman, loses the greatest happiness of his creation, is robbed of something that is greater than all employments, distinctions and pleasures of the world, if he does not live more to *Piety* and *Devotion*, than to anything else in the world.

Here are therefore no excuses made for men of *business* and *figure* in the world. *First*, Because it would be to excuse them from that which is the greatest end of living; and be only finding so many reasons for making them *less beneficial* to themselves, and *less serviceable* to God and the world.

Secondly, Because most men of business and figure engage *too far* in worldly matters; much further than the reasons of human life, or the necessities of the world require.

Merchants and *Tradesmen*, for instance, are generally ten times further engaged in business than they need; which is so far from being a reasonable *excuse* for their want of time for Devotion, that it is their *crime*, and must be censured as a blamable instance of covetousness and ambition.

The *Gentry* and people of *Figure*, either give themselves up to *State-employments*, or to the gratifications of their *passions*, in a life of *gaiety* and *debauchery;* and if these things might be admitted as allowable avocations from Devotion, Devotion must be reckoned a poor circumstance of life.

Unless *Gentlemen* can show that they have another God, than the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; another Nature, than that which is derived from *Adam;* another Religion than the Christian, it is in vain to plead their state, and dignity, and pleasures, as reasons for not preparing their souls for God, by a *strict* and *regular* Devotion.

For since Piety and Devotion are the *common unchangeable* means, of saving all the souls in the world that shall be saved, there is nothing left for the *Gentleman*, the *Soldier*, and the *Tradesman*, but to take care that their several states be, by care and watchfulness, by meditation and prayer, made states of an *exact* and *solid piety*.

If a *Merchant*, having forborn from too great business, that he might quietly attend on the service of God, should therefore die worth *twenty*, instead of *fifty* thousand pounds, could anyone say that he had mistaken his *calling*, or gone a *loser* out of the world?

If a *Gentleman* should have killed *fewer foxes*, been less frequent at *balls*, *gaming*, and *merry-meetings*, because stated parts of his time had been given to *retirement*, to *meditation* and *devotion*, could it be thought, that when he left the world, he would regret the loss of those hours, that he had given to the care and improvement of his soul?

If a *Tradesman* by aspiring after Christian perfection, and retiring himself often from his business, should instead of leaving his children fortunes to spend in *luxury* and *idleness*, leave them to live by their own honest labour; could it be said, that he had made a *wrong use* of the world, because he had shown his children, that he had more regard to that which is eternal, than to this which is so soon to be at an end?

Since therefore devotion, is not only the best and most desirable practice in a *Cloister*, but the best and most desirable practice of men, as men, and in *every state* of life, they that desire to be excused from it, because they are men of *figure*, and *estates*, and *business*, are no wiser than those, that should desire to be excused from *health* and *happiness*, because they were men of *figure* and *estates*.

I cannot see why every *Gentleman*, *Merchant*, or *Soldier*, should not put these questions seriously to himself:

What is the best thing for me to intend and drive at in all my actions? How shall I do to make the most of human life? What ways shall I wish that I had taken, when I am leaving the world?

Now to be thus wise, and to make thus much use of our reason, seems to be but a *small* and *necessary* piece of wisdom. For how can we pretend to sense and judgment, if we dare not seriously consider, and answer, and govern our lives by that which such questions require of us?

Shall a *Nobleman* think his birth too high a dignity to condescend to such questions as these? Or a *Tradesman* think his business too great, to take any care about himself?

Now here is desired no more devotion in anyone's life, than the answering these *few questions*, requires.

Any devotion that is not to the greater advantage of him that uses it, than anything that he can do in the *room* of it; any devotion that does not procure an *infinitely greater* good, than can be got by neglecting it, is freely yielded up; here is no demand of it.

But if people will live in so *much ignorance*, as never to put these questions to themselves, but push on a blind life at all chances, in quest of they know not what, nor why; without ever considering the worth, or value, or tendency of their actions, without considering what God, *reason*, *eternity*, and their own happiness require of them; it is for the honour of *devotion*, that none can neglect it, but those who are thus inconsiderate, who dare not enquire after that which is the best, and most worthy of their choice.

It is true, *Claudius*, you are a man of *figure* and *estate*, and

are to act the part of such a station in human life ; you are not called, as *Elijah* was, to be a Prophet, or as St. *Paul*, to be an Apostle.

But will you therefore not love yourself? Will you not seek and study your own happiness, because you are not called to preach up the same things to other people ?

You would think it very absurd, for a man not to value his own *health*, because he was not a *Physician ;* or the preservation of his *limbs*, because he was not a *Bone-setter.* Yet it is more absurd for you *Claudius*, to neglect the improvement of your soul in piety, because you are not an Apostle, or a Bishop.

Consider this text of Scripture, 'If ye live after the flesh, ye 'shall die ; but if through the spirit, ye do mortify the deeds of 'the body, ye shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit 'of God, they are the Sons of God.'* Do you think that this Scripture does not equally relate to all mankind ? Can you find any exception here for men of *figure* and *estates ?* Is not a *spiritual* and *devout* life here made the common condition, on which all men are to become *sons* of God ? Will you leave *hours of prayer*, and rules of devotion, to particular states of life, when nothing but the same spirit of devotion can save you, or any man, from eternal death ?

Consider again this text: 'For we must all appear before the 'judgment-seat of Christ, that everyone may receive the things 'done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be 'good or bad.'† Now if your *estate* would excuse you from appearing before this judgment-seat ; if your *figure* could protect you from receiving according to your works, there would be some pretence for your leaving devotion to other people. But if you, who are now thus distinguished, must then appear *naked* amongst *common souls*, without any other distinction from others, but such as your virtues or sins give you ; does it not as much concern you, as any *Prophet*, or *Apostle*, to make the best provision for the best rewards at that great day ?

Again, consider this doctrine of the Apostle: 'For none of us,' that is, of us Christians, 'liveth to himself, and no man dieth to 'himself: For whether we live, we live unto the Lord, and 'whether we die, we die unto the Lord. For to this end Christ 'both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both 'of the dead and the living.'‡

Now are you, *Claudius*, excepted out of the doctrine of this text ? Will you, because of your *condition*, leave it to any particular sort of people, to *live* and *die* unto Christ ? If so, you

* Rom. viii. 13, 14. † 2 Cor. v. 10. ‡ Rom. xiv. 7, 8.

must leave it to them, to be redeemed by the death and resurrection of Christ. For it is the express doctrine of the text, that for *this end* Christ died and rose again, that none of us should live to himself. It is not that Priests, or Apostles, or *Monks*, or *Hermits*, should live no longer to themselves; but that *none of us*, that is, no Christian of what state soever, should live unto himself.

If therefore there be any instances of piety, any rules of devotion, which you can neglect, and yet live as truly unto Christ, as if you observed them, this text calls you to no such devotion. But if you forsake such devotion, as you yourself know is expected from some *particular sorts* of people; such devotion as you know becomes people that live wholly unto Christ, that aspire after *great piety*; if you neglect such devotion for any *worldly consideration*, that you may live more to your own *temper* and *taste*, more to the *fashions* and *ways* of the world, you forsake the terms on which all Christians are to receive the benefit of Christ's death and resurrection.

Observe further how the same doctrine is taught by St. Peter; 'As he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in 'all manner of conversation.'*

If, therefore, *Claudius*, you are one of those that are here called, you see what it is that you are called to. It is not to have so much religion as suits with your temper, your business, or your pleasures, it is not to a particular sort of piety, that may be sufficient for Gentlemen of figure and estates; but it is *first*, to be 'holy, as He which hath called you is holy'; *secondly*, it is to be *thus holy* in all manner of conversation; that is, to carry this spirit and degree of holiness into every part, and through the whole form of your life.

And the reason the Apostle immediately gives, why this spirit of holiness must be the common spirit of Christians, as such, is very affecting, and such as equally calls upon all sorts of Christians. 'Forasmuch as ye know,' says he, 'that ye were 'not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, 'from your vain conversation,—but with the precious blood 'of Christ,' *&c.*

As if he had said, Forasmuch as ye know ye were made capable of this state of holiness, entered into a society with Christ, and made heirs of his glory, not by any human means, but by such a mysterious instance of love, as infinitely exceeds everything that can be thought of in this world; since God has redeemed you to himself, and your own happiness, at so *great*

* 1 Peter i. 15.

a price, how base and shameful must it be, if you do not henceforth devote yourselves wholly to the glory of God, and become holy, as he who hath called you is holy?

If, therefore, *Claudius*, you consider your *figure* and *estate;* or if, in the words of the text, you consider your *gold* and *silver*, and the *corruptible things* of this life, as any reason why you may live to your own humour and fancy, why you may neglect a life of strict piety and great devotion; if you think anything in the world can be an excuse for you, not imitating the holiness of Christ in the whole *course* and *form* of your life, you make yourself as guilty, as if you should neglect the holiness of Christianity, for the sake of *picking straws*.

For the greatness of this new state of life, to which we are called in Christ Jesus, to be for ever as the Angels of God in heaven, and the greatness of the *price* by which we are made capable of this state of glory, has turned everything that is *worldly*, *temporal*, and *corruptible*, into an *equal littleness;* and made it as great baseness and folly, as great a contempt of the blood of Christ, to neglect *any degrees* of holiness, because you are a man of some *estate* and *quality*, as it would be to neglect it, because you had a fancy to *pick straws*.

Again; the same Apostle saith, 'Know ye not, that your 'body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, and ye 'are not your own? For ye are bought with a price; therefore 'glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.'*

How poorly, therefore, *Claudius*, have you read the Scripture, how little do you know of Christianity, if you can yet talk of your *estate* and condition, as a pretence for a freer kind of life?

Are you any more *your own*, than he that has no estate or dignity in the world? Must *mean* and *little* people preserve their bodies as temples of the Holy Ghost, by *watching*, *fasting*, and *prayer;* but may you indulge yours in *idleness*, in *lusts*, and *sensuality*, because you have so much *rent*, or such a *title* of distinction? How poor and ignorant are such thoughts as these?

And yet you must either think thus, or else acknowledge, that the holiness of *Saints*, *Prophets*, and *Apostles*, is the holiness that you are to labour after, with all the diligence and care that you can.

And if you leave it to others, to live in such piety and devotion, in such self-denial, humility, and temperance, as may render them able to glorify God in their body, and in their spirit; you must leave it to them also, to have the benefit of the blood of Christ.

Again; the Apostle saith, 'You know how we exhorted, com-

* 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20.

'forted, and charged every one of you, that you would walk 'worthy of God, who hath called you to his kingdom and 'glory.'*

You perhaps, *Claudius*, have often heard these words, without ever thinking how much they required of you. And yet you cannot consider them, without perceiving to what an eminent state of holiness they call you.

For how can the holiness of the Christian life be set before you in higher terms, than when it is represented to you as *walking worthy of God?* Can you think of any abatements of virtue, any neglects of Devotion, that are well consistent with a life, that is to be made worthy of God? Can you suppose that any man walks in this manner, but he that watches over all his steps; and considers how everything he does, may be done in the spirit of holiness? and yet as high as these expressions carry this holiness, it is here plainly made the necessary holiness of all Christians. For the Apostle does not here exhort his fellow *Apostles* and *Saints* to this holiness, but he *commands* all Christians to endeavour after it. 'We charged,' says he, 'every 'one of you, that you would walk worthy of God, who hath 'called you to his kingdom and glory.'

Again, St. Peter saith, 'If any man speak, let him speak 'as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of 'the ability that God giveth; that God in all things may be 'glorified in Jesus Christ.'†

Do you not here, *Claudius*, plainly perceive your high calling? Is he that speaketh, to have such regard to his words, that he appear to speak as by the direction of God? Is he that giveth, to take care that he so giveth, that what he disposeth of may appear to be a gift that he hath of God? And is all this to be done, that God may be glorified in all things?

Must it not then be said, Has any man *Nobility*, *dignity*, of State, or *figure* in the world? Let him so use his *Nobility*, or *figure* of life, that it may appear he uses these as the gifts of God, for the greater setting forth of his Glory. Is there now, *Claudius*, anything forced or far-fetched in this conclusion? Is it not the plain sense of the words, that everything in life is to be made a matter of holiness unto God? If so, then your *estate* and *dignity* is so far from excusing you from *great piety* and *holiness* of life, that it lays you under a greater necessity of living more to the glory of God, because you have more of his gifts that may be made serviceable to it.

For people, therefore, of *figure*, or *business*, or *dignity* in the

* 1 Thess. ii. 11, 12. † 1 Peter iv. 11.

world, to leave *great piety* and *eminent devotion* to any particular orders of men, or such as they think have little else to do in the world, is to leave the kingdom of God to them.

For it is the very end of Christianity, to redeem all orders of men into *one holy* society, that rich and poor, high and low, masters and servants, may in one and the same spirit of piety, become a 'chosen generation,' a 'royal Priesthood, an holy 'Nation, a peculiar people, that are to show forth the praises 'of him, who hath called them out of darkness, into his mar-'vellous light.'*

Thus much being said to show, that *great Devotion* and Holiness is not to be left to any particular sort of people, but to be the *common spirit* of all that desire to live up to the terms of common Christianity; I now proceed to consider the nature and necessity of *universal love*, which is here recommended to be the subject of your Devotion at this hour. You are here also called to *Intercession*, as the most proper exercise to raise and preserve that love.

By intercession, is meant a praying to God, and interceding with him for our fellow-creatures.

Our blessed Lord hath recommended his love to us, as the pattern and example of our love to one another. As therefore he is continually making intercession for us all, so ought we to intercede and pray for one another.

'A new commandment,' saith he, 'I give unto you, that ye 'love one another, as I have loved you. By this shall all men 'know that ye are my Disciples, if ye love one another.'

The newness of this precept did not consist in this, that men were commanded to love one another; for this was an old precept, both of the law of *Moses*, and of nature. But it was new in this respect, that it was to imitate a new, and till then unheard-of example of love; it was to love one another, as Christ had loved us.

And if men are to know that we are Disciples of Christ, by thus loving one another, according to his new example of love, then it is certain, that if we are void of this love, we make it as plainly known unto men, that we are none of his Disciples.

There is no principle of the heart that is more acceptable to God, than an *universal* fervent love to all mankind, *wishing* and *praying* for their happiness; because there is no principle of the heart that makes us more like God, who is love and goodness itself, and created all beings for their enjoyment of happiness.

The greatest *Idea* that we can frame of God is, when we

* 1 Peter ii. 9.

conceive him to be a Being of infinite love and goodness; using an infinite wisdom and power, for the common good and happiness of all his creatures.

The highest notion therefore, that we can form of man is, when we conceive him as like to God in this respect as he can be; using all his finite faculties, whether of wisdom, power, or prayers, for the common good of all his fellow-creatures: Heartily desiring they may have all the happiness they are capable of, and as many benefits and assistances from him, as his state and condition in the world will permit him to give them.

And on the other hand, what a *baseness* and *iniquity* is there in all instances of *hatred*, *envy*, *spite*, and *ill-will;* if we consider that every instance of them is so far acting in *opposition* to God, and intending *mischief* and *harm* to those creatures, which God *favours*, and *protects*, and *preserves*, in order to their happiness? An *ill-natured* man amongst God's creatures, is the most *perverse* creature in the world, acting contrary to that *love*, by which himself *subsists*, and which alone gives subsistence to all that variety of beings, that enjoy life in any part of the creation.

'Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so 'do unto them.'

Now though this is a doctrine of *strict justice*, yet it is only an *universal love* that can comply with it. For as love is the *measure* of our acting towards ourselves, so we can never act in the same manner towards other people, till we look upon them with that love, with which we look upon ourselves.

As we have no degrees of spite, or envy, or ill-will to ourselves, so we cannot be disposed towards others as we are towards ourselves, till we *universally* renounce all instances of spite, and envy, and ill-will, even in the *smallest* degrees.

If we had any imperfection in our *eyes*, that made us see *any one* thing wrong, for the same reason they would show us an hundred things wrong.

So that if we have any temper of our hearts, that makes us envious, or spiteful, or ill-natured towards *any one* man, the same temper will make us envious, and spiteful, and ill-natured towards a great many more.

If therefore we desire this divine virtue of love, we must exercise and practise our hearts in the love of *all*, because it is not *Christian* love, till it is the love of all.

If a man could keep this whole law of love, and yet offend in *one point*, he would be guilty of all. For as one *allowed* instance of injustice, destroys the justice of all our other actions, so one allowed instance of envy, spite, and ill-will, renders all our other acts of benevolence and affection nothing worth.

Acts of love, that proceed not from a principle of *universal love*, are but like acts of justice, that proceed from a heart not disposed to *universal justice*.

A love which is not universal, may indeed have *tenderness* and *affection*, but it hath nothing of *righteousness*, or *piety* in it: It is but humour, and temper, or interest, or such a love as *Publicans* and *Heathens* practise.

All particular *envies* and *spite*, are as plain departures from the spirit of Christianity, as any particular acts of injustice. For it is as much a law of Christ, to treat everybody as your *neighbour*, and to love your neighbour as *yourself*, as it is a law of Christianity, to abstain from *theft*.

Now the noblest motive to this universal tenderness and affection, is founded in this Doctrine, 'God is love, and he 'that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God.'

Who therefore, whose heart has any tendency towards God, would not aspire after this divine temper, which so changes and exalts our nature into an union with him?

How should we rejoice in the exercise and practice of this love, which so often as we feel it, is so often an assurance to us, that God is in us, that we act according to his spirit, and is love itself? But we must observe, that love has then only this mighty power of uniting us to God, when it is so *pure* and *universal*, as to imitate that love, which God beareth to all his creatures.

God willeth the happiness of all beings, though it is no happiness to himself. Therefore we must desire the happiness of all beings, though no happiness cometh to us from it.

God equally delighteth in the perfections of all his creatures, therefore we should rejoice in those perfections, wherever we see them, and be as glad to have other people perfect as ourselves.

As God forgiveth all, and giveth grace to all, so we should forgive all those injuries and affronts which we receive from others, and do all the good that we can to them.

God Almighty, besides his own great example of love, which ought to draw all his creatures after it, has so provided for us, and made our happiness so *common* to us all, that we have no occasion to envy, or hate one another.

For we cannot stand in one another's way, or by enjoying any particular good, keep another from his full share of it.

As we cannot be happy, but in the enjoyment of God, so we cannot rival, or rob one another of this happiness.

And as to other things, the *enjoyments* and *prosperities* of this life, they are so little in themselves, so foreign to our happiness, and, generally speaking, so *contrary* to that which they

appear to be, that they are no foundation for envy, or spite, or hatred.

How silly would it be to envy a man, that was drinking poison out of a *golden* cup? And yet who can say, that he is acting wiser than thus, when he is envying any instance of worldly greatness?

How many *saints* has adversity sent to Heaven? And how many poor sinners has prosperity plunged into everlasting misery? A man seems then to be in the most glorious state, when he has conquered, disgraced, and humbled his enemy; though it may be, that same conquest has saved his adversary, and undone himself.

This man had perhaps never been debauched, but for his *fortune* and *advancement; that* had never been pious, but through his *poverty* and *disgrace.*

She that is envied for her beauty, may perchance owe all her *misery* to it; and *another* may be for ever happy, for having had no admirers of her *person.*

One man succeeds in everything, and so loses all: *Another* meets with nothing but crosses and disappointments, and thereby gains more than all the world is worth.

This *Clergyman* may be undone by his being made a *Bishop;* and *that* may save both himself and others, by being fixed to his first *poor vicarage.*

How envied was *Alexander* when, conquering the world, he built *towns*, set up his *statues*, and left marks of his glory in so many kingdoms!

And how despised was the poor preacher St. *Paul*, when he was *beaten with rods!* And yet how strangely was the world mistaken in their judgment! How much to be envied was St. *Paul!* How much to be pitied was *Alexander!*

These few reflections sufficiently show us, that the different conditions of this life, have nothing in them to excite our uneasy passions, nothing that can reasonably interrupt our love and affection to one another.

To proceed now to another motive to this *universal* love.

Our power of doing *external acts* of love and goodness, is often very narrow and restrained. There are, it may be, but few people to whom we can contribute any worldly relief.

But though our outward means of doing good are often thus limited, yet if our hearts are but full of love and goodness, we get, as it were, an infinite power; because God will attribute to us those good works, those acts of love, and tender charities, which we sincerely desired, and would gladly have performed, had it been in our power.

You cannot heal all the *sick*, relieve all the *poor*; you cannot comfort all in distress, nor be a father to all the fatherless. You cannot, it may be, deliver many from their misfortunes, or teach them to find comfort in God.

But if there is a love and tenderness in your heart, that *delight* in these good works, and *excites* you to do *all* that you can: If your love has *no bounds*, but continually *wishes* and *prays* for the relief and happiness of all that are in distress, you will be received by God as a benefactor to those, who have had nothing from you but your *goodwill*, and tender affections.

You cannot build *hospitals* for the *incurable*; you cannot erect *monasteries* for the education of persons in holy *solitude*, continual *prayer*, and *mortification*; but if you join in your heart with those that do, and thank God for their pious designs; if you are a friend to these great friends to mankind, and rejoice in their eminent virtues, you will be received by God as a sharer of such good works as, though they had none of your *hands*, yet had *all* your *heart*.

This consideration surely is sufficient to make us look to, and watch over our hearts, with all diligence; to study the improvement of our *inward tempers*, and aspire after every height and perfection of a loving, charitable and benevolent mind.

And on the other hand, we may hence learn the great evil and mischief of all *wrong turns* of mind, of *envy*, *spite*, *hatred*, and *ill-will*. For if the goodness of our hearts will entitle us to the reward of good actions, which we never performed; it is certain that the badness of our hearts, our envy, ill-nature, and hatred, will bring us under the guilt of actions that we have never committed.

As he that lusteth after a woman shall be reckoned an adulterer, though he has only committed the crime in his heart; so the malicious, spiteful, ill-natured man, that only *secretly* rejoices at evil, shall be reckoned a *murderer*, though he has shed no blood.

Since therefore our hearts, which are always naked and open to the eyes of God, give such an exceeding extent and increase, either to our virtues or vices, it is our *best* and *greatest* business to govern the motions of our hearts, to watch, correct, and improve the inward state and temper of our souls.

Now there is nothing that so much exalts our souls, as this heavenly love: it cleanses and purifies like a holy fire, and all ill tempers fall away before it. It makes room for all virtues, and carries them to their greatest height. Everything that is good and holy grows out of it, and it becomes a continual source of all holy desires, and pious practices. By love, I do not mean any *natural tenderness*, which is more or less in people, according to

their constitutions; but I mean a *larger principle* of the soul, founded in *reason* and *piety*, which makes us tender, kind, and benevolent to all our fellow-creatures, as creatures of God, and for his sake.

It is this love, that loves all things in God, as his creatures, as the images of his power, as the creatures of his goodness, as parts of his family, as members of his society, that becomes a holy principle of all great and good actions.

The love therefore of our neighbour, is only a branch of our love to God. For when we love God with all our hearts, and with all our souls, and with all our strength, we shall necessarily love those beings that are so nearly related to God, that have everything from him, and are created by him, to be objects of his own eternal love. If I hate or despise any one man in the world, I hate something that God cannot hate, and despise that which he loves.

And can I think that I love God with all my heart, whilst I hate that which belongs only to God, which has no other master but him, which bears his image, is part of his family, and exists only by the continuance of his love towards it?

It was the impossibility of this, that made St. *John* say, 'That 'if any man saith, he loveth God, and hateth his brother, he 'is a liar.'

These reasons sufficiently show us, that no love is *holy*, or *religious*, till it becomes *universal*.

For if Religion requires me to love all persons, as God's creatures, that belong to him, that bear his image, enjoy his protection, and make parts of his family and household; if these are the great and necessary reasons, why I should live in love and friendship with any one man in the world, they are the same great and necessary reasons, why I should live in love and friendship with every man in the world; and consequently, I offend against *all these reasons*, and break through all these *ties*, and *obligations*, whenever I want love towards any one man. The sin therefore of hating, or despising any one man, is like the sin of hating all God's creation; and the necessity of loving any one man, is the same necessity of loving every man in the world. And though many people may appear to us ever so sinful, odious, or extravagant in their conduct, we must never look upon that, as the least motive for any contempt or disregard of them; but look upon them with the greater compassion, as being in the most pitiable condition that can be.

As it was the Sins of the world, that made the Son of God become a compassionate suffering Advocate for all mankind, so no one is of the Spirit of Christ, but he that has the *utmost com-*

passion for sinners. ' Nor is there any greater sign of your own perfection, than when you find yourself all love and compassion towards them that are very weak and defective. And on the other hand, you have never less reason to be pleased with yourself, than when you find yourself most angry and offended at the behaviour of others. All sin is certainly to be hated and abhorred, wherever it is ; but then we must set ourselves against sin, as we do against *sickness* and *diseases*, by showing ourselves tender and compassionate to the *sick* and *diseased*.

All other hatred of sin, which does not fill the heart with the *softest*, *tenderest* affections towards persons miserable in it, is the servant of sin, at the same time that it seems to be hating it.

And there is no temper, which even good men ought more carefully to watch and guard against, than this. For it is a temper that lurks and hides itself under the cover of many virtues, and by being unsuspected, does the more mischief.

A man naturally fancies, that it is his own exceeding love of virtue, that makes him not able to bear with those that want it. And when he *abhors* one man, *despises* another, and cannot bear the *name* of a third, he supposes it all to be a proof of his own *high sense* of virtue, and *just hatred* of sin.

And yet, one would think, that a man needed no other cure for this temper, than this one reflection :

That if this had been the *Spirit* of the Son of God, if he had hated sin in *this manner*, there had been no redemption of the World : That if God had hated sinners in this manner, day and night, the world itself had ceased long ago.

This therefore we may take for a certain rule, that the more we partake of the divine nature, the more improved we are ourselves, and the higher our sense of virtue is, the more we shall pity and compassionate those that want it. The sight of such people will then, instead of raising in us a haughty contempt, or peevish indignation towards them, fill us with such bowels of compassion, as when we see the miseries of an *hospital*.

That the follies therefore, crimes, and ill-behaviour of our fellow-creatures, may not lessen that love and tenderness which we are to have for all mankind, we should often consider the reasons, on which this duty of love is founded.

Now we are to love our neighbour, that is, all mankind, not because they are wise, holy, virtuous, or well-behaved ; for all mankind neither ever was, nor ever will be so ; therefore it is certain, that the reason of our being obliged to love them, cannot be founded in their virtue.

Again ; if their virtue or goodness were the reason of our being obliged to love people, we should have no *rule* to proceed

by; because though some people's virtues or vices are very notorious, yet, generally speaking, we are but very ill judges of the virtue and merit of other people.

Thirdly, We are sure that the virtue or merit of persons, is not the reason of our being obliged to love them, because we are commanded to pay the highest instances of love to our worst enemies; we are to love, and bless, and pray for those that most injuriously treat us. This therefore is demonstration, that the merit of persons is not the reason, on which our obligation to love them is founded.

Let us further consider, what that love is, which we owe to our neighbour. It is to love him as ourselves, that is, to have all those sentiments towards him, which we have towards ourselves; to wish him everything that we may lawfully wish to ourselves; to be glad of every good, and sorry for every evil, that happens to him; and to be ready to do him all such acts of kindness, as we are always ready to do to ourselves.

This love therefore, you see, is nothing else but a love of *benevolence;* it requires nothing of us but such *good wishes, tender affections*, and such acts of *kindness*, as we show to ourselves.

This is all the love that we owe to the best of men; and we are never to want any degree of this love to the worst, or most unreasonable man in the world.

Now what is the reason why we are to love every man in this manner? It is answered, that our obligation to love all men in this manner, is founded upon many reasons.

First, Upon a reason of *equity;* for if it is *just*, to love ourselves in this manner, it must be *unjust* to deny any degree of this love to others, because every man is so exactly of the same nature, and in the same condition as ourselves.

If therefore your own crimes and follies, do not lessen your obligation to seek your *own good*, and wish *well* to yourself; neither do the follies and crimes of your neighbour, lessen your obligation to wish and seek the good of your neighbour.

Another reason for this love, is founded in the authority of God, who has commanded us to love every man as ourself.

Thirdly, We are obliged to this love, in imitation of God's goodness, that we may be children of our Father which is in Heaven, who willeth the happiness of all his creatures, and maketh his Sun to rise on the evil, and on the good.

Fourthly, Our redemption by Jesus Christ, calleth us to the exercise of this love, who came from Heaven, and laid down his life, out of love to the whole sinful world.

Fifthly, By the command of our Lord and Saviour, who has required us to love one another, as he has loved us.

These are the great, perpetual reasons, on which our obligation to love all mankind as ourselves, is founded.

These reasons never vary or change, they always continue in their full force; and therefore equally oblige at all times, and in regard to all persons.

God loves us, not because we are wise, and good, and holy, but in pity to us, because we want this happiness: He loves us, in order to make us good. Our love therefore must take this course; not looking for, or requiring the merit of our brethren, but pitying their disorders, and wishing them all the good that they want, and are capable of receiving.

It appears now plainly, from what has been said, that the love which we owe to our brethren, is only a love of *benevolence. Secondly*, That this duty of benevolence, is founded upon such reasons as never vary or change, such as have no dependence upon the *qualities* of persons. From whence it follows, that it is the same *great sin*, to want this love to a bad man, as to want it to a good man. Because he that denies any of this benevolence to a bad man, offends against all the *same reasons* of love, as he does that denies any benevolence to a good man: And consequently it is the same sin.

When therefore, you let loose any ill-natured passion, either of hatred, or contempt towards (as you suppose) an ill man, consider what you would think of another, that was doing the same towards a good man, and be assured that you are committing the same sin.

You will perhaps say, How is it possible to love a good and a bad man, in the same degree?

Just as it is possible to be as *just* and *faithful* to a good man, as to an evil man. Now are you in any difficulty about performing *justice* and *faithfulness* to a bad man? Are you in any doubts, whether you need be so *just* and *faithful* to him, as you need be to a good man? Now why is it, that you are in no doubt about it? It is because you know, that justice and faithfulness are founded upon reasons that never *vary* or *change*, that have no dependence upon the *merits* of men, but are founded in the nature of things, in the laws of God, and therefore are to be observed with an equal exactness towards good and bad men.

Now do but think thus justly of charity, or love to your neighbour, that it is founded upon reasons, that *vary* not, that have no dependence upon the *merits* of men, and then you will find it as possible to perform the same *exact charity*, as the same *exact justice*, to all men, whether good or bad.

You will perhaps further ask, if you are not to have a *particular esteem*, *veneration*, and *reverence* for good men? It is answered;

Yes. But then this *high esteem* and *veneration*, is a thing very different from that love of *benevolence* which we owe to our neighbour.

The high esteem and veneration which you have for a man of eminent piety, is no act of charity to him ; it is not out of pity and compassion, that you so reverence him, but it is rather an act of charity to yourself, that such esteem and veneration, may excite you to follow his example.

You may, and ought to love, like, and approve the life which the good man leads ; but then this is only the loving of virtue, wherever we see it. And we do not love virtue with the love of benevolence, as anything that wants our *good wishes*, but as something that is our proper good.

The whole of the matter is this. The *actions* which you are to *love*, *esteem*, and *admire*, are the actions of good and pious men ; but the *persons* to whom you are to do all the good you can, in all sorts of kindness and compassion, are all persons, whether good or bad.

This distinction betwixt love and benevolence, and esteem or veneration, is very plain and obvious. And you may perhaps still better see the plainness and necessity of it, by this following instance.

No man is to have a *high esteem* or *honour*, for his own accomplishments, or behaviour ; yet every man is to love himself, that is, to wish well to himself ; therefore this distinction betwixt love and esteem, is not only plain, but very necessary to be observed.

Again, if you think it hardly possible to dislike the actions of unreasonable men, and yet have a true love for them : Consider this with relation to yourself.

It is very possible, I hope, for you not only to dislike, but to *detest* and *abhor* a great many of your own past actions, and to accuse yourself of *great folly* for them. But do you then lose any of those tender sentiments towards yourself, which you used to have ? Do you then cease to wish well to yourself ? Is not the love of yourself as strong then, as at any other time ?

Now what is thus possible with relation to ourselves, is in the same manner possible with relation to others. We may have the highest good wishes towards them, desiring for them, every good that we desire for ourselves, and yet at the same time, dislike their way of life.

To proceed ; all that love which we may justly have for ourselves, we are in *strict justice* obliged to exercise towards all other men ; and we offend against the great law of our nature, and the greatest laws of God, when our tempers towards others, are different from those which we have towards ourselves.

Now that *self-love* which is *just* and *reasonable*, keeps us constantly *tender*, *compassionate*, and *well-affected* towards ourselves; if therefore you do not feel these kind dispositions towards all other people, you may be assured, that you are not in that state of charity, which is the very life and soul of Christian piety.

You know how it hurts you, to be made the *jest* and *ridicule* of other people; how it grieves you to be *robbed* of your reputation, and *deprived* of the favourable opinion of your neighbours: If therefore you expose others to *scorn* and *contempt* in *any* degree; if it pleases you to see or hear of their *frailties* and *infirmities;* or if you are only *loath* to conceal their faults, you are so far from loving such people as yourself, that you may be justly supposed to have as much hatred for them, as you have love for yourself. For such tempers are as truly the proper fruits of hatred, as the contrary tempers are the proper fruits of love.

And as it is a certain sign that you love yourself, because you are tender of everything that concerns you; so it is as certain a sign that you hate your neighbour, when you are pleased with anything that hurts him.

But now, if the want of a *true* and *exact charity*, be so great a want, that, as St. *Paul* saith, it renders our greatest virtues but empty sounds, and *tinkling cymbals*, how highly does it concern us to study every art, and practise every method of raising our souls to this state of charity? It is for this reason, that you are here desired, not to let this hour of prayer pass, without a full and solemn supplication to God, for all the instances of an universal love and benevolence to all mankind.

Such daily constant devotion, being the only likely means of preserving you in such a state of love, as is necessary to prove you to be a true follower of Jesus Christ.

Chapter XXI.

Of the necessity and benefit of Intercession, *considered as an exercise of universal love. How all orders of men are to pray and intercede with God for one another. How naturally such intercession, amends and reforms the hearts of those that use it.*

THAT intercession is a great and necessary part of Christian Devotion, is very evident from Scripture.

The first followers of Christ, seem to support all their love, and to maintain all their intercourse and correspondence, by mutual prayers for one another.

St. *Paul*, whether he writes to churches, or particular persons, shows his *intercession* to be perpetual for them, that they are the constant subject of his prayers.

Thus to the *Philippians*, 'I thank my God upon every remembrance of you. Always in every prayer of mine for you all, 'making request with joy.'* Here we see, not only a continual intercession, but performed with so much gladness, as shows that it was an exercise of love, in which he highly rejoiced.

His Devotion had also the same care for particular persons; as appears by the following passage. 'I thank my God, whom 'I serve from my forefathers, with a pure conscience, that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night 'and day.'† How holy an acquaintance and friendship was this, how worthy of persons that were raised above the world, and related to one another, as new members of a kingdom of Heaven!

Apostles and great Saints did not only thus benefit, and bless particular Churches, and private persons; but they themselves also received graces from God by the prayers of others. Thus saith St. *Paul* to the *Corinthians*, 'You also helping together 'by prayer for us, that for the gift bestowed upon us by the 'means of many persons, thanks may be given by many on our 'behalf.'‡

This was the *ancient friendship* of Christians, uniting and

* Phil. i. 4, 5. † 2 Tim. i. 3. ‡ 2 Cor. i. 11.

cementing their hearts, not by worldly considerations, or human passions, but by the mutual communication of spiritual blessings, by prayers and thanksgivings to God for one another.

It was this holy intercession, that raised Christians to such a state of mutual love, as far exceeded all that had been praised and admired in human friendship. And when the same spirit of *intercession* is again in the world, when Christianity has the same power over the hearts of people, that it then had, this holy friendship will be again in fashion, and Christians will be again the wonder of the world, for that exceeding love which they bear to one another.

For a *frequent* intercession with God, earnestly beseeching him to forgive the sins of all mankind, to bless them with his providence, enlighten them with his Spirit, and bring them to everlasting happiness, is the divinest exercise that the heart of man can be engaged in.

Be daily therefore on your knees, in a solemn, deliberate performance of this devotion, praying for others in such *forms*, with such *length*, *importunity*, and *earnestness*, as you use for yourself; and you will find all *little*, *ill-natured* passions die away, your heart grow *great* and *generous*, delighting in the common happiness of others, as you used only to delight in your own.

For he that daily prays to God, that all men may be happy in heaven, takes the likeliest way to make him wish for, and delight in their happiness on earth. And it is hardly possible for you, to beseech and entreat God to make anyone happy in the highest enjoyments of his glory to all eternity, and yet be troubled to see him enjoy the much smaller gifts of God, in this short and low state of human life.

For how strange and unnatural would it be, to pray to God to grant *health* and a *longer* life to a *sick man*, and at the same time to *envy* him the poor pleasure of *agreeable medicines?*

Yet this would be no more strange, or unnatural, than to pray to God that your neighbour may enjoy the *highest* degrees of his mercy and favour, and yet at the same time envy him the little *credit* and *figure*, he hath amongst his fellow-creatures.

When therefore you have once habituated your heart to a serious performance of this holy intercession, you have done a great deal, to render it incapable of *spite* and *envy*, and to make it *naturally* delight in the happiness of all mankind.

This is the natural effect of a *general intercession* for all mankind. But the greatest benefits of it are then received, when it descends to such *particular* instances, as our *state* and *condition* in life more particularly require of us.

Though we are to treat all mankind as *neighbours* and *brethren*,

as any occasion offers; yet as we can only live in the actual society of a few, and are by our state and condition more particularly *related* to some than others; so when our intercession is made an exercise of love and care, for those amongst whom our *lot* is fallen, or who belong to us in a *nearer relation*, it then becomes the greatest benefit to ourselves, and produces its best effects in our own hearts.

If therefore you should always change and alter your intercessions, according as the *needs* and *necessities* of your *neighbours* or *acquaintance* seem to require; beseeching God to deliver them from such or such particular evils, or to grant them this or that particular gift, or blessing; such intercessions, besides the great charity of them, would have a mighty effect upon your own heart, as disposing you to every other good office, and to the exercise of every other virtue towards such persons, as have so often a place in your prayers.

This would make it pleasant to you, to be *courteous*, *civil*, and *condescending* to all about you; and make you unable to say, or do a rude, or hard thing to those, for whom you had used yourself to be so kind and compassionate in your prayers.

For there is nothing that makes us love a man so much, as praying for him; and when you can once do this sincerely for any man, you have fitted your soul for the performance of everything that is kind and civil towards him. This will fill your heart with a generosity and tenderness, that will give you a better and sweeter behaviour, than anything that is called *fine breeding* and *good manners*.

By considering yourself as an advocate with God, for your neighbours and acquaintance, you would never find it hard to be at peace with them yourself. It would be easy to you to bear with, and forgive those, for whom you particularly implored the divine mercy and forgiveness.

Such prayers as these, amongst *neighbours* and *acquaintance*, would unite them to one another in the strongest bonds of love and tenderness. It would exalt and ennoble their souls, and teach them to consider one another in a higher state, as members of a *spiritual society*, that are created for the enjoyment of the common blessings of God and fellow-heirs of the same future glory.

And by being thus desirous, that everyone should have their full share of the favours of God, they would not only be content, but glad to see one another happy, in the little enjoyments of this transitory life.

These would be the natural effects of such an intercession, amongst people of the same *town* or *neighbourhood*, or that were acquainted with one another's *state* and *condition*.

Ouranius is a holy Priest, full of the spirit of the Gospel, watching, labouring, and praying for a poor *country village.* Every soul in it, is as dear to him as himself; and he loves them all, as he loves himself; because he *prays* for them all, as often as he prays for himself.

If his whole life is one continual exercise of great zeal and labour, hardly ever satisfied with any degrees of care and watchfulness, it is because he has learned the great value of souls, by so often appearing before God, as an *intercessor* for them.

He never thinks he can love, or do enough for his flock; because he never considers them in any other view, than as so many persons, that by receiving the gifts and graces of God, are to become his *hope*, his *joy*, and his *crown of rejoicing*.

He goes about his Parish, and visits everybody in it; but visits in the same spirit of piety, that he preaches to them; he visits them, to encourage their virtues, to assist them with his advice and counsel, to discover their manner of life, and to know the state of their souls, that he may *intercede* with God for them, according to their *particular necessities.*

When *Ouranius* first entered into holy orders, he had a *haughtiness* in his temper, a great *contempt* and *disregard* for all foolish and unreasonable people; but he has *prayed away* this spirit, and has now the greatest tenderness for the most obstinate sinners; because he is always hoping, that God will sooner or later hear those prayers that he makes for their repentance.

The *rudeness*, *ill-nature*, or *perverse* behaviour of any of his flock, used at first to betray him into impatience; but now it raises no other passion in him, than a desire of being upon his knees in prayer to God for them.

Thus have his *prayers* for others, *altered* and *amended* the state of his own heart.

It would strangely delight you to see, with what *spirit* he converses, with what *tenderness* he reproves, with what *affection* he exhorts, and with what *vigour* he preaches; and it is all owing to this, because he reproves, exhorts, and preaches to those, for whom he first *prays* to God.

This devotion softens his heart, enlightens his mind, sweetens his temper, and makes everything that comes from him, instructive, amiable, and affecting.

At his first coming to his little *Village*, it was as disagreeable to him as a *prison*, and every day seemed too tedious to be endured in so retired a place. He thought his Parish was too full of *poor* and *mean* people, that were none of them fit for the conversation of a *Gentleman.*

This put him upon a close application to his studies. He kept

much at home, writ *notes* upon *Homer* and *Plautus*, and sometimes thought it hard to be called to pray by any poor body, when he was just in the midst of one of *Homer's battles.*

This was his *polite*, or I may rather say, *poor*, *ignorant* turn of mind, before devotion had got the government of his heart.

But now his days are so far from being tedious, or his Parish too great a retirement, that he now only wants more time to do that variety of good, which his soul thirsts after. The solitude of his little Parish is become matter of great comfort to him, because he hopes that God has placed him and his flock there, to make it their way to Heaven.

He can now not only converse with, but gladly attend and wait upon the poorest kind of people. He is now daily watching over the *weak* and *infirm*, humbling himself to perverse, rude, ignorant people, wherever he can find them ; and is so far from desiring to be considered as a *Gentleman*, that he desires to be used as the *servant* of all ; and in the spirit of his Lord and Master *girds himself*, and is glad to *kneel down* and *wash* any of their *feet.*

He now thinks the poorest creature in his Parish good enough, and great enough, to deserve the humblest attendances, the kindest friendships, the tenderest offices, he can possibly show them.

He is so far now from wanting agreeable company, that he thinks there is no better conversation in the world, than to be talking with *poor* and *mean* people about the kingdom of Heaven.

All these noble thoughts, and divine sentiments, are the effects of his great devotion ; he presents everyone so often before God, in his prayers, that he never thinks he can *esteem*, *reverence*, or *serve* those enough, for whom he implores so many mercies from God.

Ouranius is mightily affected with this passage of Holy Scripture, ' The effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth ' much.'*

This makes him practise all the arts of holy living, and aspire after every instance of piety and righteousness, that his prayers for his flock may have their full force, and avail much with God.

For this reason, he has sold a small estate that he had, and has erected a charitable retirement for ancient, poor people, to live in prayer and piety, that his prayers being assisted by such good works, may *pierce the clouds*, and bring down blessings upon those souls committed to his care.

Ouranius reads how God himself said unto *Abimelech*, concern-

* James v. 16.

ing *Abraham*, 'He is a Prophet; he shall pray for thee, and thou 'shalt live.'*

And again, how he said of *Job*, 'And my servant Job shall 'pray for you; for him will I accept.'†

From these passages *Ouranius* justly concludes, that the prayers of men eminent for holiness of life, have an extraordinary power with God; that he grants to other people such pardons, reliefs and blessings, through their prayers, as would not be granted to men of less piety and perfection. This makes *Ouranius* exceeding studious of Christian perfection, searching after every grace and holy temper, purifying his heart all manner of ways, fearful of every error and defect in his life, lest his prayers for his flock should be less availing with God, through his own defects in holiness.

This makes him careful of every *temper* of his heart, give *alms* of all that he hath, *watch*, and *fast*, and *mortify*, and live according to the strictest rules of *temperance*, *meekness*, and *humility*, that he may be in some degree like an *Abraham*, or a *Job* in his Parish, and make such prayers for them, as God will hear and accept.

These are the happy effects, which a *devout intercession* hath produced in the life of *Ouranius*.

And if other people, in their several stations, were to imitate this example, in such a manner as suited their particular state of life, they would certainly find the same happy effects from it.

If *Masters*, for instance, were thus to remember their *servants* in their prayers, beseeching God to bless them, and suiting their petitions to the particular wants and necessities of their servants; letting no day pass, without a *full performance* of this part of Devotion, the benefit would be as great to themselves, as to their servants.

No way so likely as this, to inspire them with a true sense of that power which they have in their hands, to make them delight in doing good, and becoming exemplary in all the parts of a wise and good master.

The presenting their servants so often before God, as equally related to God, and entitled to the same expectations of Heaven, as themselves, would naturally incline them to treat them, not only with such *humanity* as became *fellow-creatures*, but with such *tenderness*, *care*, and *generosity*, as became *fellow-heirs* of the same glory. This Devotion would make masters inclined to everything that was good towards their servants; be watchful of their behaviour, and as ready to require of them an exact

* Gen xx. 7. † Job xlii. 8.

observance of the duties of Christianity, as of the duties of their service.

This would teach them to consider their servants as God's servants, to desire their perfection, to do nothing before them that might corrupt their minds, to impose no business upon them that should lessen their sense of Religion, or hinder them from their full share of Devotion, both public and private. This praying for them, would make them as glad to see their servants eminent in piety as themselves, and contrive that they should have all the opportunities and encouragements, both to know, and perform all the duties of the Christian life.

How natural would it be for such a Master, to perform every part of Family Devotion; to have constant prayers, to excuse no one's absence from them; to have the Scriptures, and books of piety often read amongst his servants; to take all opportunities of instructing them, of raising their minds to God, and teaching them to do all their business, as a service to God, and upon the hopes and expectations of another life?

How natural would it be for such a one to pity their weakness and ignorance, to bear with the dulness of their understandings, or the perverseness of their tempers; to reprove them with tenderness, exhort them with affection, as hoping that God would hear his prayers for them?

How impossible would it be for a Master, that thus interceded with God for his servants, to use any unkind threatenings towards them, to damn and curse them as *dogs* and scoundrels, and treat them only as the dregs of the creation?

This Devotion would give them another spirit, and make them consider how to make proper returns of care, kindness, and protection to those, who had spent their strength and time in service and attendance upon them.

Now if *Gentlemen* think it too low an employment for their state and dignity, to exercise such a Devotion as this for their *servants*, let them consider how far they are from the spirit of Christ, who made Himself not only an intercessor, but a sacrifice for the whole race of sinful mankind.

Let them consider how miserable their greatness would be, if the Son of God should think it as much below Him to pray for them, as they do to pray for their fellow-creatures.

Let them consider how far they are from that spirit, which prays for its most unjust enemies, if they have not kindness enough to pray for those, by whose labours and service they live in ease themselves.

Again, If *Parents* should thus make themselves *advocates* and *intercessors* with God for their children, constantly applying to

Heaven in behalf of them, nothing would be more likely, not only to bless their children, but also to form and dispose their own minds, to the performance of everything that was excellent and praiseworthy.

I do not suppose, but that the generality of parents remember their children in their prayers, and call upon God to bless them. But the thing here intended, is not a general remembrance of them, but a *regular method* of recommending all their *particular needs* and *necessities* unto God; and of praying for every such particular *grace* and *virtue* for them, as their *state* and *condition* of life shall seem to require.

The state of parents is a holy state, in some degree like that of the Priesthood, and calls upon them to bless their children with their prayers and sacrifices to God. Thus it was that holy *Job* watched over, and blessed his children, he 'sanctified them, 'he rose up early in the morning, and offered burnt-offerings, 'according to the number of them all.'*

If parents therefore, considering themselves in this light, should be daily calling upon God, in a *solemn*, *deliberate* manner, *altering* and *extending* their intercessions, as the *state* and *growth* of their children required, such Devotion would have a mighty influence upon the rest of their lives; it would make them very circumspect in the government of themselves; prudent and careful of everything they said or did, lest their example should hinder that, which they so constantly desired in their prayers.

If a father was daily making particular prayers to God, that he would please to inspire his children with *true piety*, *great humility*, and *strict temperance*, what could be more likely to make the father himself become exemplary in these virtues? How naturally would he grow ashamed of wanting such virtues, as he thought necessary for his children? So that his prayers for their piety, would be a certain means of exalting his own, to its greatest height.

If a father thus considered himself as an intercessor with God for his children, to bless them with his prayers, what more likely means to make him aspire after every degree of holiness, that he might thereby be fitter to obtain blessings from Heaven for them? How would such thoughts make him avoid everything that was sinful and displeasing to God, lest when he prayed for his children, God should reject his prayers?

How tenderly, how religiously would such a father converse with his children, whom he considered as his little spiritual flock, whose virtues he was to form by his example, encourage by his

* Job i. 5.

authority, nourish by his counsel, and prosper by his prayers to God for them?

How fearful would he be of all greedy and unjust ways of raising their fortune, of bringing them up in pride and indulgence, or of making them too fond of the world, lest he should thereby render them incapable of those graces, which he was so often beseeching God to grant them?

These being the plain, natural, happy effects of this intercession, all parents, I hope, who have the real welfare of their children at heart, who desire to be their true friends and benefactors, and to live amongst them in the spirit of wisdom and piety, will not neglect so great a means, both of raising their own virtue, and doing an eternal good to those, who are so near and dear to them, by the strongest ties of nature.

Lastly, If all people, when they feel the first approaches of *resentment*, *envy*, or *contempt*, towards others; or if in all little disagreements, and misunderstandings whatever, they should, instead of indulging their minds with little low reflections, have recourse, at such times, to a more particular and extraordinary intercession with God, for such persons as had raised their envy, resentment, or discontent; this would be a certain way to prevent the growth of all uncharitable tempers.

If you were also to form your prayer, or intercession at that time, to the greatest degree of *contrariety* to that temper which you were then in, it would be an excellent means of raising your heart to the greatest state of perfection.

As for instance, when at any time you find in your heart motions of envy towards any person, whether on account of his *riches*, *power*, *reputation*, *learning*, or *advancement*, if you should immediately betake yourself at that time to your prayers, and pray to God to bless and prosper him in that *very thing*, which raised your envy; if you should express and repeat your petitions in the strongest terms, beseeching God to grant him all the happiness from the enjoyment of it, that can possibly be received, you would soon find it to be the best antidote in the world, to expel the venom of that poisonous passion.

This would be such a triumph over yourself, would so humble and reduce your heart into obedience and order, that the Devil would even be afraid of tempting you again in the same manner, when he saw the temptation turned into so great a means of amending and reforming the state of your heart.

Again, If in any little difference, or misunderstandings that you happened to have at any time, with a *relation*, a *neighbour*, or anyone else, you should then pray for them in a more *extraordinary manner*, than you ever did before; beseeching God to

give them every grace, and blessing, and happiness you can think of, you would have taken the speediest method that can be, of reconciling all differences, and clearing up all misunderstandings. You would then think nothing too great to be forgiven ; stay for no condescensions, need no mediation of a third person, but be glad to testify your love and good-will to him, who had so high a place in your secret prayers.

This would be the mighty power of such Christian devotion ; it would remove all peevish passions, soften your heart into the most tender condescensions, and be the best arbitrator of all differences that happened betwixt you and any of your acquaintance.

The greatest resentments amongst friends and neighbours, most often arise from poor *punctilios*, and *little mistakes* in conduct. A certain sign that their friendship is *merely human*, not founded upon religious considerations, or supported by such a course of mutual prayer for one another, as the first Christians used.

For such devotion must necessarily either destroy such tempers, or be itself destroyed by them.

You cannot possibly have any ill-temper, or show any unkind behaviour to a man, for whose welfare you are so much concerned, as to be his advocate with God in private.

Hence we may also learn the odious nature and exceeding guilt of all *spite*, *hatred*, *contempt*, and *angry passions ;* they are not to be considered as defects in *good-nature*, and *sweetness* of temper, not as failings in *civility* of manners, or *good-breeding*, but as such *base tempers*, as are entirely inconsistent with the *charity* of intercession.

You think it a small matter to be *peevish* or *ill-natured*, to such or such a man ; but you should consider whether it be a small matter to do that, which you could not do, if you had but so much charity, as to be able to recommend him to God in your prayers.

You think it a small matter to *ridicule* one man, and *despise* another ; but you should consider, whether it be a small matter to want that charity towards these people, which Christians are not allowed to want towards their most inveterate enemies.

For be but as charitable to these men, do but *bless* and *pray* for them, as you are obliged to bless and pray for your *enemies*, and then you will find that you have charity enough, to make it impossible for you to treat them with any degree of scorn or contempt.

For you cannot possibly despise and ridicule that man, whom your *private prayers* recommend to the love and favour of God.

When you despise and ridicule a man, it is with no other end, but to make him ridiculous and contemptible in the eyes of other men, and in order to prevent their esteem of him. How therefore can it be possible for you, sincerely to beseech God to bless that man with the *honour* of his love and favour, whom you desire men to treat as worthy of their *contempt?*

Could you, out of love to a neighbour, desire your *Prince* to honour him with every mark of his esteem and favour, and yet at the same time expose him to the scorn and derision of your own servants?

Yet this is as possible, as to expose that man to the scorn and contempt of your fellow-creatures, whom you recommend to the favour of God in your secret prayers.

From these considerations, we may plainly discover the reasonableness and justice of this doctrine of the Gospel, 'Whosoever shall say unto his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council; but whosoever shall say, Thou Fool, shall be in danger of hell-fire.'*

We are not, I suppose, to believe that every hasty word, or unreasonable expression, that slips from us by *chance* or *surprise* and is contrary to our intention and tempers, is the great sin here signified.

But he that says, *Raca*, or thou *Fool*, must chiefly mean him that allows himself in *deliberate*, *designed* acts of *scorn* and *contempt* towards his brother, and in that temper speak to him, and of him, in reproachful language.

Now since it appears, that these tempers are at the bottom, the most *rank uncharitableness*, since no one can be guilty of them, but because he has not charity enough to pray to God for his brother; it cannot be thought hard or rigorous justice, that such tempers should endanger the salvation of Christians. For who would think it hard, that a Christian cannot obtain the favour of God for himself, unless he reverence and esteem his brother Christian, as one that bears the image of God, as one for whom Christ died, as a member of Christ's body, as a member of that holy society on earth, which is in union with that triumphant Church in Heaven?

Yet all these considerations must be forgot, all these glorious privileges disregarded, before a man can treat him that has them, as an object of scorn and contempt.

So that to scorn, or despise a brother, or, as our blessed Lord says, to call him *Raca*, or *Fool*, must be looked upon, as amongst the most odious, unjust, and guilty tempers, that can

* Matt. v 22.

be supported in the heart of a Christian, and justly excluding him from all his hopes in the salvation of Jesus Christ.

For to despise one for whom Christ died, is to be as contrary to Christ, as he that despises anything that Christ has said, or done.

If a Christian that had lived with the holy Virgin *Mary*, should, after the death of our Lord, have taken any occasion to treat her with contempt, you would certainly say, that he had lost his piety towards our blessed Lord. For a true reverence for Christ must have forced him to treat her with respect, who was so nearly related to him.

I dare appeal to any man's mind, whether it does not tell him, that this relation of the Virgin *Mary* to our blessed Lord, must have obliged all those that lived and conversed with her, to treat her with great respect and esteem. Might not a man have justly dreaded the vengeance of God upon him, for any scorn or contempt that he had shown to her?

Now if this be plain and obvious reasoning, if a contempt offered to the Virgin *Mary*, must have been interpreted a contempt of Christ, because of her near relation to him, then let the same reasoning show you the great impiety of despising any brother.

You cannot despise a brother, without despising him that stands in a *high relation* to God, to his Son Jesus Christ, and to the Holy Trinity.

You would certainly think it a mighty impiety to treat a *writing* with great contempt, that had been written by the *finger* of God; and can you think it a less impiety to contemn and vilify a brother, who is not only the *workmanship*, but the *image* of God?

You would justly think it great profaneness, to contemn and trample upon an *Altar*, because it was appropriated to holy uses, and had had the body of Christ so often placed upon it; and can you suppose it to be less profaneness to scorn and trample upon a brother, who so belongs to God, that his very body is to be considered as the 'temple of the Holy Ghost'?*

Had you despised and ill-treated the Virgin *Mary*, you had been chargeable with the impiety of despising her, of whom Christ was born. And if you scorn and despise a brother, you are chargeable with the impiety of despising him, for whom Christ laid down his life.

And now if this scornful temper is founded upon a disregard of all these relations, which every Christian bears to God, and

* 1 Cor. vi. 19.

Christ, and the Holy Trinity, can you wonder, or think it hard, that a Christian who thus allows himself to despise a brother, should be in danger of hell-fire?

Secondly, It must here be observed, that though in these words, 'whosoever shall say, Thou Fool,' *&c.*, the *great sin* there condemned is an *allowed temper* of despising a brother; yet we are also to believe, that all *hasty expressions*, and words of *contempt*, though spoken by *surprise* or *accident*, are by this text condemned as great sins, and notorious breaches of Christian charity.

They proceed from great want of Christian love and meekness, and call for great repentance. They are only little sins, when compared with *habits* and *settled tempers* of treating a brother despitefully, and fall as directly under the condemnation of this text, as the grossest habits of uncharitableness.

And the reason why we are always to apprehend great guilt, and call ourselves to a strict repentance for these hasty expressions of anger and contempt, is this; because they seldom are what they seem to be, that is, *mere starts* of temper, that were occasioned *purely* by *surprise* or *accident*, but are much more our own proper acts, than we generally imagine.

A man says a great many bitter things; he presently forgives himself, because he supposes it was only the *suddenness* of the occasion, or something *accidental*, that carried him so far beyond himself.

But he should consider, that perhaps the *accident*, or *surprise*, was not the occasion of his angry expressions, but might only be the occasion of his angry temper showing itself.

Now as this is, generally speaking, the case, as all *haughty*, *angry* language generally proceeds from some *secret habits* of pride in the heart; so people that are subject to it, though only now and then as accidents happen, have great reason to repent of more than their present behaviour, to charge themselves with greater guilt than accidental passion, and to bring themselves to such penance and mortification, as is proper to destroy *habits* of a haughty spirit.

And this may be the reason, why the text looks no further than the outward language; why it only says, 'Whosoever shall 'say, Thou Fool'; because few can proceed so far, as to the accidental use of *haughty*, *disdainful* language, but they whose hearts are more or less possessed with *habits*, and *settled tempers* of pride and haughtiness.

But to return, *Intercession* is not only the best arbitrator of all differences, the best promoter of true friendship, the best cure and preservative against all unkind tempers, all angry and

haughty passions, but is also of great use to discover to us the true state of our own hearts.

There are many tempers which we think *lawful* and *innocent*, which we never suspect of any harm; which if they were to be tried by this devotion, would soon show us how we have deceived ourselves.

Susurrus is a pious, temperate, good man, remarkable for abundance of excellent qualities. No one more constant at the service of the Church, or whose heart is more affected with it. His charity is so great, that he almost starves himself, to be able to give greater alms to the poor.

Yet *Susurrus* had a prodigious failing, along with these great virtues.

He had a mighty inclination to hear and discover, all the defects and infirmities of all about him. You were welcome to tell him anything of anybody, provided that you did not do it in the *style* of an enemy. He never disliked an *evil-speaker,* but when his language was *rough* and *passionate*. If you would but whisper anything gently, though it was ever so bad in itself, *Susurrus* was ready to receive it.

When he visits, you generally hear him relating, how sorry he is for the defects and failings of such a neighbour. He is always letting you know, how tender he is of the reputation of his neighbour; how loath to say that which he is forced to say; and how gladly he would conceal it, if it could be concealed.

Susurrus had such a tender, compassionate manner of relating things the most prejudicial to his neighbour, that he even seemed, both to himself and others, to be exercising a Christian charity, at the same time that he was indulging a whispering, evil-speaking temper.

Susurrus once whispered to a particular friend in great secrecy, something too bad to be spoken of publicly. He ended with saying, how glad he was, that it had not yet took wind, and that he had some hopes it might not be true, though the suspicions were very strong. His friend made him this reply:

You say, *Susurrus*, that you are glad it has not yet taken wind; and that you have some hopes it may not prove true. Go home therefore to your *closet*, and pray to God for this man, in such a manner, and with such earnestness, as you would pray for yourself on the like occasion.

Beseech God to interpose in his favour, to save him from false accusers, and bring all those to shame, who by *uncharitable whispers*, and *secret stories*, wound him, like those that stab in the dark. And when you have made this prayer, then you may,

if you please, go tell the same secret to some other friend, that you have told to me.

Susurrus was exceedingly affected with this rebuke, and felt the force of it upon his conscience, in as lively a manner, as if he had seen the *books opened* at the day of Judgment.

All other arguments might have been resisted; but it was impossible for *Susurrus*, either to reject, or to follow this advice, without being equally self-condemned in the highest degree.

From that time to this, he has constantly used himself to this method of intercession; and his heart is so entirely changed by it, that he can now no more privately whisper anything to the prejudice of another, than he can openly pray to God to do people hurt.

Whisperings and evil-speakings now hurt his ears, like oaths and curses; and he has appointed one day in the week, to be a day of penance as long as he lives, to humble himself before God, in the sorrowful confession of his former guilt.

It may well be wondered, how a man of so much piety as *Susurrus*, could be so long deceived in himself, as to live in such a state of *scandal* and *evil-speaking*, without suspecting himself to be guilty of it. But it was the *tenderness* and seeming *compassion*, with which he heard and related everything, that deceived both himself and others.

This was a falseness of heart, which was only to be fully discovered, by the true *charity* of *intercession*.

And if people of virtue, who think as little harm of themselves, as *Susurrus* did, were often to try their spirit by such an *intercession*, they would often find themselves to be such, as they least of all suspected.

I have laid before you, the many and great advantages of *intercession*. You have seen what a divine friendship it must needs beget amongst Christians, how dear it would render all relations and neighbours to one another; how it tends to make *Clergymen*, *Masters*, and *Parents*, exemplary and perfect in all the duties of their station; how certainly it destroys all envy, spite, and ill-natured passions; how speedily it reconciles all differences, and with what a piercing light it discovers to a man the true state of his heart.

These considerations will, I hope, persuade you to make such intercession as is proper for your state, the *constant*, *chief* matter of your devotion, at this hour of prayer.

Chapter XXII.

Recommending Devotion at three o'clock, called in Scripture the ninth hour *of the day. The subject of prayer at this hour, is* resignation *to the divine pleasure. The nature and duty of conformity to the will of God, in all our actions and designs.*

I HAVE recommended certain subjects, to be made the fixed and chief matter of your Devotions, at all the hours of prayer that have been already considered.

As *thanksgiving*, and *oblation* of yourself to God, at your first prayers in the morning. At *nine*, the great virtue of Christian *humility* is to be the chief part of your petitions. At *twelve*, you are called upon to pray for all the graces of *universal love*, and to raise it in your heart by such general and particular *intercessions*, as your own state, and relation to other people, seem more particularly to require of you.

At this *hour* of the afternoon, you are desired to consider the necessity of *resignation* and *conformity* to the will of God, and to make this great virtue the principal matter of your prayers.

There is nothing *wise*, or *holy*, or *just*, but the *great will* of God. This is as strictly true in the most rigid sense, as to say, that nothing is infinite and eternal but God.

No beings therefore, whether in Heaven, or on earth, can be wise, or holy, or just, but so far as they conform to *this will* of God. It is conformity to this will, that gives virtue and perfection to the highest services of angels in Heaven ; and it is conformity to the same will, that makes the ordinary actions of men on earth, become an acceptable service unto God.

The whole nature of virtue consists in conforming, and the whole nature of vice in declining from the will of God. All God's creatures are created to fulfil his will ; the *Sun* and *Moon* obey his will, by the necessity of their nature ; *Angels* conform to his will, by the perfection of their nature : If therefore you would show yourself, not to be a *rebel* and *apostate* from the order of the creation, you must act like beings both above and below you ; it must be the great desire of your soul, that God's will may be done by you on earth, as it is done in heaven. It

must be the settled purpose and intention of your heart, to *will* nothing, *design* nothing, *do* nothing, but so far as you have reason to believe, that it is the will of God, that you should so desire, design, and do.

'Tis as just and necessary to live in this state of heart, to think thus of God and yourself, as to think that you have any dependence upon him. And it is as great a rebellion against God, to think that your will may ever differ from his, as to think that you have not received the power of *willing* for him.

You are therefore to consider yourself as a being, that has no other business in the world, but to be that which God requires you to be; to have no tempers, no rules of your own, to seek no self-designs, or self ends, but to fill some *place*, and act some *part* in strict conformity, and thankful resignation to the divine pleasure.

To think that you are your own, or at your own disposal, is as absurd, as to think that you created, and can preserve yourself. It is as plain and necessary a first principle, to believe you are thus God's, that you thus belong to him, and are to act and suffer all in a thankful resignation to his pleasure, as to believe, that in him you *live, and move, and have your being.*

Resignation to the divine will, signifies a cheerful approbation, and thankful acceptance of everything that comes from God. It is not enough patiently to submit, but we must thankfully receive, and fully approve of everything, that by the order of God's providence happens to us.

For there is no reason why we should be patient, but what is as good and strong a reason why we should be thankful. If we were under the hands of a wise and good *Physician*, that could not mistake, or do anything to us, but what certainly tended to our benefit; it would not be enough to be patient, and abstain from murmurings against such a Physician; but it would be as great a breach of duty and gratitude to him, not to be pleased and thankful for what he did, as it would be to murmur at him.

Now this is our true state with relation to God; we cannot be said so much as to *believe* in him, unless we believe him to be of *infinite wisdom.* Every argument therefore for patience under his disposal to us, is as strong an argument for approbation and thankfulness, for everything that he does to us. And there needs no more to dispose us to this gratitude towards God, than a full belief in him, that he is this being of infinite wisdom, love, and goodness.

Do but assent to this truth, in the same manner as you assent to things of which you have no doubt, and then you will cheerfully approve of everything, that God has already approved for you.

For as you cannot possibly be pleased with the behaviour of any person towards you, but because it is for your good, is wise in itself, and the effect of his love and goodness towards you; so when you are satisfied that God does not only do that which is wise, and good, and kind, but that which is the effect of an infinite wisdom and love in the care of you; it will be as necessary, whilst you have this faith, to be thankful and pleased with everything which God chooses for you, as to wish your own happiness.

Whenever therefore you find yourself disposed to *uneasiness*, or *murmuring*, at anything that is the effect of God's providence over you, you must look upon yourself as *denying*, either the wisdom, or goodness of God. For every complaint necessarily supposes this. You would never complain of your *neighbour*, but that you suppose you can show either his *unwise*, *unjust*, or *unkind* behaviour towards you.

Now every murmuring, impatient reflection, under the providence of God, is the same accusation of God. A complaint always supposes *ill-usage*.

Hence also you may see the great necessity and piety of this thankful state of heart, because the want of it, implies an accusation of God's want, either of wisdom, or goodness, in his disposal of us. It is not therefore any high degree of perfection, founded in any uncommon *nicety* of thinking, or *refined notions*, but a plain principle, founded in this plain belief, that God is a being of infinite wisdom and goodness.

Now this resignation to the divine will, may be considered in two respects; *First*, As it signifies a thankful approbation of God's *general* providence over the world: *Secondly*, As it signifies a thankful acceptance of his *particular* providence over us.

First, Every man is by the law of his creation, by the first article of his creed, obliged to consent to, and acknowledge the wisdom and goodness of God in his *general providence* over the whole world. He is to believe, that it is the effect of God's great wisdom and goodness, that the world itself was formed at such a particular time, and in such a manner: That the general order of nature, the whole frame of things, is contrived and formed in the best manner. He is to believe that God's providence over states and kingdoms, times and seasons, is all for the best: That the revolutions of state, and changes of empire, the rise and fall of monarchies, persecutions, wars, famines, and plagues, are all permitted, and conducted by God's providence, to the general good of man in this state of trial.

A good man is to believe all this, with the same fulness of assent, as he believes that God is in every place, though he neither sees, nor can comprehend the manner of his presence.

This is a noble magnificence of thought, a true religious greatness of mind, to be thus affected with God's general providence, admiring and magnifying his wisdom in all things; never murmuring at the course of the world, or the state of things, but looking upon all around, at heaven and earth, as a pleased spectator; and adoring that invisible hand, which gives laws to all motions, and overrules all events, to ends suitable to the highest wisdom and goodness.

It is very common for people, to allow themselves great liberty in finding fault with such things, as have only God for their cause.

Everyone thinks he may justly say, what a *wretched, abominable climate* he lives in. This man is frequently telling you, what a *dismal, cursed* day it is, and what intolerable *seasons* we have. Another thinks he has very little to thank God for, that it is hardly worth his while to live in a world so full of changes and revolutions. But these are tempers of great impiety, and show that religion has not yet its seat in the heart of those that have them.

It sounds indeed much better to murmur at the course of the world, or the state of things, than to murmur at Providence; to complain of the seasons and weather, than to complain of God; but if these have no other cause but God and His providence, it is a poor distinction to say, that you are only angry at the things, but not at the cause and director of them.

How *sacred* the whole frame of the world is, how all things are to be considered as God's, and referred to him, is fully taught by our blessed Lord in the case of *oaths:* 'But I say 'unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven, for it is God's 'throne; nor by the earth, for it is his footstool; neither by 'Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King; neither shalt 'thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair 'white or black';* that is, because the whiteness or blackness of thy hair is not thine, but God's.

Here you see all things in the whole order of nature; from the highest heavens to the smallest hair, are always to be considered, not separately as they are in themselves, but as in some relation to God. And if this be good reasoning, thou shalt not swear by the *earth*, a *city*, or thy *hair*, because these things are God's, and in a certain manner belong to him; is it not exactly the same reasoning to say, Thou shalt not murmur at the *seasons* of the earth, the *states* of cities, and the change of *times*, because all these things are in the hands of God, have him for their

* Matt. v. 36.

Author, are directed and governed by him to such ends, as are most suitable to his wise Providence?

If you think you can murmur at the state of things, without murmuring at Providence, or complain of seasons without complaining of God; hear what our blessed Lord says further upon oaths: 'Whoso shall swear by the altar, sweareth by it, and by 'all things thereon: And whoso shall swear by the temple, 'sweareth by him that dwelleth therein: And he that shall 'swear by heaven, sweareth by the throne of God, and by him 'that sitteth thereon.'*

Now does not this Scripture plainly oblige us to reason after this manner, Whoso murmurs at the course of the world, murmurs at God that governs the course of the world. Whoso repines at *seasons* and *weather*, and speaks impatiently of times and events, repines and speaketh impatiently of God, who is the sole Lord and Governor of *times*, *seasons*, and *events*.

As therefore when we think of God himself, we are to have no sentiments but of praise and thanksgiving; so when we look at those things which are under the direction of God, and governed by his Providence, we are to receive them with the same tempers of praise and gratitude.

And though we are not to think all things right, and just, and lawful, which the Providence of God permits; for then nothing could be unjust, because nothing is without his permission; yet we must adore God in the greatest public calamities, the most grievous persecutions, as things that are suffered by God, like *plagues* and *famines*, for ends suitable to his wisdom and glory in the government of the world.

There is nothing more suitable to the piety of a reasonable creature, or the spirit of a Christian, than thus to approve, admire, and glorify God in all the acts of his general Providence; considering the whole world as his particular family, and all events as directed by his wisdom.

Everyone seems to consent to this, as an undeniable truth, *That all things must be as God pleases;* and is not this enough to make every man pleased with them himself? And how can a man be a peevish complainer of anything that is the effect of Providence, but by showing that his own *self-will* and *self-wisdom*, is of more weight with him, than the will and wisdom of God? And what can Religion be said to have done for a man, whose heart is in this state?

For if he cannot thank and praise God, as well in calamities and sufferings, as in prosperity and happiness, he is as far from

* Matt. xxiii. 20.

the piety of a Christian, as he that only loves them that love him, is from the charity of a Christian. For to thank God only for such things as you like, is no more a proper act of piety, than to believe only what you see, is an act of faith.

Resignation and thanksgiving to God are only acts of piety, when they are acts of *faith*, *trust*, and *confidence* in the divine Goodness.

The faith of *Abraham* was an act of true piety, because it stopped at no difficulties, was not altered or lessened by any human appearances. It first of all carried him, against all show of happiness, from his own kindred and country, into a strange land, *not knowing whither he went.* It afterwards made him, against all appearances of nature, when his 'body was dead, 'when he was about an hundred years old,' depend upon the promise of God, 'being fully persuaded, that what God had 'promised, he was able to perform.' It was this same faith, that against so many pleas of nature, so many appearances of reason, prevailed upon him to 'offer up Isaac — accounting 'that God was able to raise him up from the dead.'*

Now this faith is the true pattern of Christian resignation to the divine pleasure ; you are to thank and praise God, not only for things agreeable to you, that have the appearance of happiness and comfort ; but when you are like *Abraham*, called from all appearances of comfort, to be a *pilgrim* in a strange land, to part with an *only son ;* being as fully persuaded of the divine Goodness in all things that happen to you, as *Abraham* was of the divine promise, when there was the least appearance of its being performed.

This is true Christian resignation to God, which requires no more to the support of it, than such a plain assurance of the goodness of God, as *Abraham* had of his veracity. And if you ask yourself, what greater reason *Abraham* had to depend upon the divine Veracity, than you have to depend upon the divine Goodness, you will find that none can be given.

You cannot therefore look upon this as an unnecessary, high pitch of perfection, since the want of it implies the want, not of any high notions, but of a plain and ordinary faith in the most certain doctrines, both of natural and revealed religion.

Thus much concerning resignation to the divine Will, as it signifies a thankful approbation of God's *general providence :* It is now to be considered, as it signifies a *thankful* acceptance of God's *particular providence* over us.

Every man is to consider himself as a particular object of

* Heb xi. 17, 19.

God's providence; under the same care and protection of God, as if the world had been made for him alone. It is not by chance that any man is born at such a *time*, of such *parents*, and in such a *place* and *condition*. It is as certain, that every *soul* comes into the body at such a time, and in such circumstances, by the express *designment* of God, according to *some purposes* of his will, and for some *particular ends;* this is as certain, as that it is by the express designment of God, that some beings are *Angels*, and others are *men*.

It is as much by the counsel and eternal purpose of God, that you should be born in your particular state, and that *Isaac* should be the son of *Abraham*, as that *Gabriel* should be an *Angel*, and *Isaac* a man.

The Scriptures assure us, that it was by divine appointment, that our blessed Saviour was born at *Bethlehem*, and at such a time. Now although it was owing to the dignity of his person, and the great importance of his birth, that thus much of the divine counsel was declared to the world, concerning the time and manner of it; yet we are as sure from the same Scriptures, that the *time* and *manner* of every man's coming into the world, is according to some *eternal purposes* and *direction* of Divine Providence, and in *such time*, and *place*, and *circumstances*, as are directed and governed by God, for *particular ends* of his wisdom and goodness.

This we are as certain of from plain revelation, as we can be of anything. For if we are told, that not a *sparrow falleth to the ground without our heavenly Father;* can anything more strongly teach us, that much greater beings, such as human souls, come not into the world without the care and direction of our heavenly Father? If it is said, *the very hairs of your head are all numbered;* is it not to teach us, that nothing, not the *smallest* things imaginable, happen to us by *chance?* But if the smallest things we can conceive, are declared to be under the divine direction, need we, or can we, be more plainly taught, that the greatest things of life, such as the *manner* of our coming into the world, our *parents*, the *time*, and other *circumstances* of our birth and condition, are all according to the eternal *purposes*, *direction*, and *appointment* of Divine Providence?

When the disciples put this question to our blessed Lord, concerning the blind man, *saying*, 'Master, who did sin, this 'man, or his parents, that he was born blind?' He that was the eternal wisdom of God, made this answer, 'Neither hath this 'man sinned, nor his parents; but that the works of God should 'be made manifest in him.'* Plainly declaring, that the par-

* John ix. 3, 7.

ticular circumstances of every man's birth, the body that he receives, and the condition and state of life into which he is born, are appointed by a secret Providence, which directs all things to their particular *times* and *seasons*, and *manner* of existence, that the wisdom and works of God may be made manifest in them all.

As therefore it is thus certain, that we are what we are, as to birth, time, and condition of entering into the world; since all that is particular in our state, is the effect of God's particular providence over us, and intended for some particular ends both of his glory and our own happiness, we are by the greatest obligations of gratitude, called upon to conform, and resign our will to the will of God in all these respects; thankfully approving and accepting everything that is particular in our state; praising and glorifying his name for our birth of such *parents*, and in such *circumstances* of state and condition; being fully assured, that it was for some reasons of infinite wisdom and goodness, that we were so born into such particular states of life.

If the man above-mentioned, was born blind, that the *works of God might be manifested in him*, had he not great reason to praise God, for appointing him in such a particular manner, to be the instrument of his Glory? And if one person is born *here*, and another *there;* if one falls amongst *riches*, and another into *poverty;* if one receives his flesh and blood from these *parents*, and another from those, for as particular ends, as the man was born blind; have not all people the greatest reason to bless God, and to be thankful for their *particular state* and *condition*, because all that is particular in it, is as directly intended for the glory of God, and their own good, as the *particular blindness* of that man, who was so born, that 'the works of God might be manifested in 'him'?

How noble an idea does this give us of the divine Omniscience presiding over the whole world, and governing such a long chain and combination of seeming accidents and chances, to the common and particular advantage of all beings? So that all persons, in such a wonderful variety of causes, accidents, and events, should all fall into such particular states, as were foreseen, and fore-ordained to their best advantage, and so as to be most serviceable to the wise and glorious ends of God's government of all the world.

Had you been anything else than what you are, you had, all things considered, been less wisely provided for than you are now; you had wanted some circumstances and conditions, that are best fitted to make you happy yourself, and serviceable to the glory of God.

Could you see all that which God sees, all that happy chain of causes and motives, which are to move and invite you to a right course of life, you would see something to make you like that state you are in, as fitter for you than any other.

But as you cannot see this, so it is here that your Christian *faith* and *trust* in God, is to exercise itself, and render you as grateful and thankful for the happiness of your state, as if you saw everything that contributes to it with your own eyes.

But now if this is the case of every man in the world, thus blessed with some particular state that is most convenient for him, how reasonable is it for every man, to will that which God has already willed for him ; and by a pious faith and trust in the divine goodness, thankfully adore and magnify that wise providence, which he is sure has made the best choice for him of those things, which he could not choose for himself.

Every uneasiness at our own state, is founded upon comparing it with that of other people. Which is full as unreasonable, as if a man in a *dropsy* should be angry at those that prescribe different things to him, from those which are prescribed to people in *health*. For all the different states of *life*, are like the different states of *diseases*, what is a remedy to one man in his state, may be poison to another.

So that to murmur because you are not as some others are, is as if a man in one disease, should murmur that he is not treated like him that is in another. Whereas if he was to have his will, he would be killed by that, which will prove the cure of another.

It is just thus in the various conditions of life ; if you give yourself up to uneasiness, or complain at anything in your state, you may, for aught you know, be so ungrateful to God, as to murmur at that very thing, which is to prove the cause of your salvation.

Had you it in your power to get that which you think is so grievous to want, it might perhaps be that very thing, which of all others, would most expose you to eternal damnation.

So that whether we consider the infinite goodness of God, that cannot choose amiss for us, or our own great ignorance of what is most advantageous to us, there can be nothing so reasonable and pious, as to have no will but that of God's, and desire nothing for ourselves, in our *persons*, our *state*, and *condition*, but that which the good providence of God appoints us.

Further, as the good providence of God thus introduces us into the world, into such states and conditions of life, as are most convenient for us, so the same unerring wisdom, orders all events and changes in the whole course of our lives, in such a manner, as to render them the fittest means to exercise and improve our virtue.

Nothing hurts us, nothing destroys us, but the ill-use of that liberty, with which God has entrusted us.

We are as sure that nothing happens to us by chance, as that the world itself was not made by chance; we are as certain that all things happen, and work together for our good, as that God is goodness itself. So that a man has as much reason to *will* everything that happens to him, because God *wills* it, as to think that is wisest, which is directed by infinite wisdom.

This is not cheating, or soothing ourselves into any false content, or imaginary happiness; but is a satisfaction grounded upon as great a certainty, as the being and attributes of God.

For if we are right in believing God to act over us with infinite wisdom and goodness, we cannot carry our notions of conformity and resignation to the divine will too high; nor can we ever be deceived, by thinking that to be best for us, which God has brought upon us.

For the providence of God is not more concerned in the government of *night* and *day*, and the variety of *seasons*, than in the common course of events, that seem most to depend upon the mere wills of men. So that it is as strictly right, to look upon all worldly accidents and changes, all the various turns and alterations in your own life, to be as truly the effects of Divine Providence, as the rising and setting of the Sun, or the alterations of the seasons of the year. As you are therefore always to adore the wisdom of God in the direction of these things; so it is the same reasonable duty, always to magnify God, as an equal Director of everything that happens to you in the course of your own life.

This holy resignation and conformity of your will to the will of God, being so much the true state of piety, I hope you will think it proper to make this hour of prayer, a constant season of applying to God for so great a gift: That by thus constantly praying for it, your heart may be habitually disposed towards it, and always in a state of readiness to look at everything as God's, and to consider him in everything; that so everything that befalls you, may be received in the spirit of piety, and made a means of exercising some virtue.

There is nothing that so powerfully governs the heart, that so strongly excites us to wise and reasonable actions, as a true sense of God's *presence*. But as we cannot see, or apprehend the essence of God, so nothing will so constantly keep us under a lively sense of the presence of God, as this holy resignation, which attributes everything to him, and receives everything as from him.

Could we see a *miracle* from God, how would our thoughts be

affected with an holy awe and veneration of his presence! But if we consider everything as God's doing, either by order or permission, we shall then be affected with *common things*, as they would be who saw a *miracle*.

For as there is nothing to affect you in a miracle, but as it is the *action* of God, and bespeaks his *presence;* so when you consider God, as *acting* in all things, and all events, then all things will become venerable to you, like *miracles*, and fill you with the same awful sentiments of the divine presence.

Now you must not reserve the exercise of this pious temper, to any particular times or occasions, or fancy how *resigned* you will be to God, if such or such trials should happen. For this is amusing yourself with the *notion* or *idea* of resignation, instead of the virtue itself.

Do not therefore please yourself with thinking, how piously you would act and submit to God in a *plague*, a *famine*, or *persecution*, but be intent upon the perfection of the present day; and be assured, that the best way of showing a *true zeal*, is to make *little things* the occasion of *great piety*.

Begin therefore in the smallest matters, and most ordinary occasions, and accustom your mind to the daily exercise of this pious temper, in the lowest occurrences of life. And when a *contempt*, an *affront*, a little *injury*, *loss*, or *disappointment*, or the smallest events of every day, continually raise your mind to God in proper acts of resignation, then you may justly hope, that you shall be numbered amongst those that are resigned and thankful to God in the greatest trials and afflictions.

Chapter XXIII.

Of Evening prayer. Of the nature and necessity of examination. How we are to be particular in the confession of all our sins. How we are to fill our minds with a just horror and dread of all sin.

I AM now come to six o'clock in the evening, which, according to the Scripture account, is called the twelfth, or *last hour* of the day. This is a time so proper for Devotion, that I suppose nothing need be said to recommend it, as a season of prayer to all people that profess any regard to piety.

As the labour and action of every state of life, is generally over at this hour, so this is the proper time for everyone to call himself to account, and review all his behaviour, from the first action of the day. The necessity of this examination, is founded upon the necessity of repentance. For if it be necessary to repent of all our sins, if the guilt of unrepented sins still continue upon us, then it is necessary, not only that all our sins, but the particular circumstances and aggravations of them, be known and recollected, and brought to repentance.

The Scripture saith, 'If we confess our sins, he is faithful and 'just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteous-'ness.'* Which is as much as to say, that then only our sins are forgiven, and we cleansed from the guilt and unrighteousness of them, when they are thus confessed, and repented of.

There seems therefore to be the greatest necessity, that all our daily actions be constantly observed, and brought to account, lest by a negligence we load ourselves with the guilt of unrepented sins.

This examination therefore of ourselves every evening, is not only to be considered as a *commendable rule*, and fit for a wise man to observe, but as something that is as necessary, as a daily confession and repentance of our sins; because this daily repentance is of very little significancy, and loses all its chief benefit, unless it be a *particular confession* and repentance of the sins of that day. This examination is necessary to repentance, in the same manner as *time* is necessary; you cannot repent or express your sorrow, unless you allow some time for it; nor can you repent, but so far as you *know* what it is that you are repenting of. So that when it is said, that it is necessary to examine and call your actions to account; it is only saying, that it is necessary to know *what*, and how many things you are to repent of.

You perhaps have hitherto only used yourself to confess yourself a sinner in *general*, and ask forgiveness in the *gross*, without any *particular remembrance*, or contrition for the particular sins of that day. And by this practice you are brought to believe, that the same short, general form of confession of sin in general, is a sufficient repentance for every day.

Suppose another person should hold, that a confession of our sins in general *once* at the end of *every week* was sufficient; and that it was as well to confess the sins of *seven days* altogether, as to have a particular repentance at the end of every day.

I know you sufficiently see the unreasonableness and impiety of this opinion, and that you think it is easy enough so show the danger and folly of it.

* 1 John i. 9.

Yet you cannot bring one argument against such an opinion, but what will be as good an argument against such a *daily repentance*, as does not call the *particular sins* of that day to a strict account.

For as you can bring no *express text* or Scripture against such an opinion, but must take all your arguments, from the nature of *repentance*, and the necessity of a *particular repentance* for particular sins, so every argument of that kind, must as fully prove the necessity, of being very particular in our repentance of the sins of every day. Since nothing can be justly said against leaving the sins of the *whole week* to be repented for in the *gross*, but what may as justly be said against a daily repentance, which considers the sins of that day only in the *gross*.

Would you tell such a man, that a daily confession was necessary to keep up an abhorrence of sin, that the mind would grow hardened and senseless of the guilt of sin without it? And is not this as good a reason for requiring, that your daily repentance be *very express* and *particular* for your daily sins? For if confession is to raise an abhorrence of sin, surely that confession which *considers* and *lays open* your particular sins, that brings them to light with all their circumstances and aggravations, that requires a particular sorrowful acknowledgment of every sin, must in a much greater degree fill the mind with an abhorrence of sin, than that which only, in *one* and the *same form* of words, confesses you only to be a sinner in *general*. For as this is nothing but what the *greatest Saint* may justly say of himself, so the daily repeating of only such a confession, has nothing in it to make you truly ashamed of your own way of life.

Again; must you not tell such a man, that by leaving himself to such a *weekly*, *general* confession, he would be in great danger of forgetting a great many of his sins? But is there any sense or force in this argument, unless you suppose that our sins are all to be remembered, and brought to a particular repentance? And is it not necessary, that our particular sins be not forgotten, but particularly remembered in our daily, as in a repentance at any other time?

So that every argument for a daily confession and repentance, is the same argument for the confession and repentance of the *particular sins* of every day.

Because daily confession has no other reason or necessity, but our daily sins; and therefore is nothing of what it should be, but so far as it is a repentance and sorrowful acknowledgment of the sins of the day.

You would, I suppose, think yourself chargeable with great impiety, if you were to go to bed without confessing yourself to

be a sinner and asking pardon of God; you would not think it sufficient that you did so yesterday. And yet if without any regard to the present day, you only repeat the same form of words that you used yesterday, the sins of the present day may justly be looked upon to have had no repentance. For if the sins of the present day require a new confession, it must be such a new confession as is proper to itself. For it is the *state* and *condition* of every day, that is to determine the *state* and *manner* of your repentance in the evening; otherwise the same general form of words is rather an empty formality, that has the appearance of a duty, than such a true performance of it, as is necessary to make it truly useful to you.

Let it be supposed, that on a certain day you have been guilty of these sins; that you have told a *vain lie* upon yourself, ascribing something falsely to yourself through pride; that you have been guilty of *detraction*, and indulged yourself in *some degree* of intemperance. Let it be supposed, that on the next day you have lived in a contrary manner; that you have neglected no duty of devotion, and been the rest of the day innocently employed, in your proper business. Let it be supposed, that on the evening of both these days you only use the same confession in *general*, considering it rather as a duty that is to be performed every night, than as a repentance that is to be suited to the *particular state* of the day.

Can it with any reason be said, that each day has had its proper repentance? Is it not as good sense to say, there is no difference in the guilt of these days, as to say that there need be no different repentance at the end of them? Or how can each of them have its proper repentance, but by its having a repentance as large and extensive, and particular as the guilt of each day?

Again, let it be supposed, that in that day, when you had been guilty of the three notorious sins above-mentioned, that in your evening repentance, you had only called one of them to mind. Is it not plain, that the other two are unrepented of, and that therefore their guilt still abides upon you? So that you are then in the state of him, who commits himself to the night without the repentance for such a day, as had betrayed him into two such great sins.

Now these are not needless particulars, or such scrupulous niceties, as a man need not trouble himself about; but are such plain truths, as essentially concern the very life of piety. For if repentance is necessary, it is full as necessary that it be rightly performed, and in due manner.

And I have entered into all these particulars, only to show you in the plainest manner, that *examination*, and a careful review of

all the actions of the Day, is not only to be looked upon as a good rule, but as something as necessary as repentance itself.

If a man is to account for his expenses at night, can it be thought a needless exactness in him, to take notice of every particular expense in the Day?

And if a man is to repent of his sins at night, can it be thought too great a piece of scrupulosity in him, to know and call to mind what sins he is to repent of?

Further; though it should be granted, that a confession in *general* may be a sufficient repentance for the end of such days, as have only the unavoidable frailties of our nature to lament; yet even this fully proves the absolute necessity of this self-examination: for without this examination, who can know that he has gone through any day in this manner?

Again: An evening repentance, which thus brings all the actions of the day to account, is not only necessary to wipe off the guilt of sin, but is also the most certain way to amend and perfect our lives.

For it is only such a repentance as this, that touches the heart, awakens the conscience, and leaves an horror and detestation of sin upon the mind.

For instance, If it should happen, that upon any particular evening, all that you could charge yourself with should be this, *viz.*, a *hasty, negligent* performance of your devotions, or too much time spent in an *impertinent conversation;* if the unreasonableness of these things were fully reflected upon, and acknowledged; if you were then to condemn yourself before God for them, and implore his pardon and assisting grace, what could be so likely a means, to prevent your falling into the same faults the next day?

Or if you should fall into them again the next day; yet if they were again brought to the same examination, and condemnation in the presence of God, their happening again, would be such a proof to you of your own *folly* and *weakness*, would cause such a *pain* and *remorse* in your mind, and fill you with such *shame* and *confusion* at yourself, as would, in all probability, make you exceedingly desirous of greater perfection.

Now in the case of repeated sins, this would be the certain benefit, that we should receive from this examination and confession; the mind would thereby be made humble, full of sorrow and deep compunction, and, by degrees, forced into amendment.

Whereas a *formal, general* confession, that is only considered as an evening duty, that overlooks the particular mistakes of the day, and is the same, whether the day be spent ill or well, has little or no effect upon the mind; a man may use such a daily

confession, and yet go on sinning and confessing all his life, without any remorse of mind, or true desire of amendment.

For if your own particular sins are left out of your confession, your confessing of sin in *general*, has no more effect upon your mind, than if you had only confessed, that *all men* in general are *sinners*. And there is nothing in any confession to show that it is yours, but so far as it is a *self-accusation*, not of sin in general, or such as is common to all others, but of such *particular sins*, as are your own *proper shame* and reproach.

No other confession, but such as thus discovers and accuses your own particular guilt, can be an act of true sorrow, or real concern at your own condition. And a confession that is without this sorrow and compunction of heart, has nothing in it, either to atone for past sins, or to produce in us any true reformation and amendment of life.

To proceed: In order to make this examination still further beneficial, every man should oblige himself to a certain method in it. As every man has something *particular* in his nature, stronger inclinations to *some vices* than others, some infirmities that *stick closer* to him, and harder to be conquered than others; and as it is as easy for every man to know this of himself, as to know whom he likes or dislikes; so it is highly necessary, that these particularities of our natures and tempers, should never escape a severe trial at our evening repentance: I say, a *severe trial*, because nothing but a rigorous severity against these natural tempers, is sufficient to conquer them.

They are the *right eyes*, that are not to be spared; but to be plucked out and cast from us. For as they are the infirmities of nature, so they have the strength of nature, and must be treated with great opposition, or they will soon be too strong for us.

He therefore who knows himself most of all subject to *anger* and *passion*, must be very *exact* and *constant* in his examination of this temper every evening. He must find out every slip that he has made of that kind, whether in thought, or word, or action; he must *shame*, and *reproach*, and *accuse* himself before God, for everything that he has said or done in obedience to his passion. He must no more allow himself to forget the examination of this temper, than to forget his whole prayers.

Again: If you find that *vanity* is your prevailing temper, that is always putting you upon the *adornment* of your person, and catching after everything that *compliments* or *flatters* your abilities, never spare or forget this temper in your evening examination; but confess to God every vanity of thought, or word, or action, that you have been guilty of, and put yourself to all the shame and confusion for it that you can.

In this manner, should all people act with regard to their *chief frailty*, to which their nature most inclines them. And though it should not immediately do all that they would wish, yet by a constant practice, it would certainly in a short time produce its desired effect.

Further: As all states and employments of life have their particular *dangers* and *temptations*, and expose people more to some sins than others, so every man that wishes his own improvement, should make it a *necessary part* of his evening examination, to consider how he has avoided, or fallen into such sins, as are most common to his state of life.

For as our business and condition of life has great power over us, so nothing but such watchfulness at this, can secure us from those temptations to which it daily exposes us.

The *poor man*, from his condition of life, is always in danger of *repining* and *uneasiness;* the *rich man* is most exposed to *sensuality* and *indulgence;* the *tradesman* to *lying* and *unreasonable* gains; the *scholar* to *pride* and *vanity;* so that in every state of life, a man should always, in his examination of himself, have a strict eye upon those faults, to which his state of life most of all exposes him.

Again: As it is reasonable to suppose, that every good man has entered into, or at least proposed to himself *some method* of holy living, and set himself some *such rules* to observe, as are not common to other people, and only known to himself: so it should be a constant part of his night recollection, to examine how, and in what degree, he has observed them, and to reproach himself before God, for every neglect of them.

By rules, I here mean, such rules as relate to the well-ordering of our *time*, and the *business* of our common life: Such rules as prescribe a certain order to all that we are to do, our *business*, *devotion*, *mortifications*, *readings*, *retirements*, *conversation*, *meals*, *refreshments*, *sleep*, and the like.

Now as good rules relating to all these things, are certain means of great improvement, and such as all serious Christians must needs propose to themselves, so they will hardly ever be observed to any purpose, unless they are made the *constant subject* of our evening examination.

Lastly, You are not to content yourself with a *hasty general* review of the day, but you must enter upon it with deliberation; begin with the *first action* of the day, and proceed step by step, through every particular matter that you have been concerned in, and so let no *time*, *place*, or *action* be overlooked.

An examination thus managed, will in a little time make you

as different from yourself, as a *wise man* is different from an *idiot*. It will give you such a newness of mind, such a spirit of wisdom, and desire of perfection, as you were an entire stranger to before.

Thus much concerning the *evening examination*.

I proceed now to lay before you such considerations, as may fill your mind with a just dread and horror of all sin, and help you to confess your own, in the most passionate contrition and sorrow of heart.

Consider first, how odious all sin is to God, what a mighty baseness it is, and how abominable it renders sinners in the sight of God. That it is sin alone that makes the great difference betwixt an angel, and the devil; and that every sinner is, so far as he sins, a friend of the devil's, and carrying on his work against God. That sin is a greater blemish and defilement of the soul, than any filth or disease is a defilement of the body. And to be content to live in sin, is a much greater baseness, than to desire to wallow in the mire, or love any bodily impurity.

Consider how you must abhor a creature, that delighted in nothing but filth and nastiness, that hated everything that was decent and clean; and let this teach you to apprehend, how odious that soul that delights in nothing but the impurity of sin, must appear unto God.

For all sins, whether of *sensuality*, *pride*, or *falseness*, or any other *irregular* passion, are nothing else but the filth, and impure diseases of the rational soul. And all righteousness is nothing else but the *purity*, the *decency*, the *beauty* and *perfection* of that spirit, which is made in the image of God.

Again: Learn what horror you ought to have for the guilt of sin, from the greatness of that *atonement* which has been made for it.

God made the world by the breath of his mouth, by a word speaking, but the redemption of the world has been a work of longer labour.

How easily God can create beings, we learn from the first chapter of *Genesis;* but how difficult it is for infinite mercy to forgive sins, we learn from that *costly atonement*, those *bloody sacrifices*, those *pains* and *penances*, those *sicknesses* and *deaths*, which all must be undergone, before the guilty sinner is fit to appear in the presence of God.

Ponder these great truths: That the Son of God was forced to become man, to be partaker of all our infirmities, to undergo a poor, painful, miserable, and contemptible life, to be persecuted, hated, and at last nailed to a Cross, that by such sufferings, he might render God propitious to that nature in which he suffered.

That all the bloody sacrifices and atonements of the *Jewish* Law, were to represent the necessity of this *great sacrifice*, and the *great Displeasure* God bore to sinners.

That the world is still under the *curse* of sin, and *certain marks* of God's displeasure at it; such as *famines, plagues, tempests, sickness, diseases* and *death*.

Consider that all the sons of *Adam* are to go through a painful, sickly life, denying and mortifying their natural appetites, and crucifying the lusts of the flesh, in order to have a share in the atonement of our Saviour's death.

That all their penances and self-denials, all their tears and repentance, are only made available by that great Intercession, which is still making for them at the right hand of God.

Consider these great truths; that this *mysterious redemption*, all these *sacrifices* and *sufferings*, both of God and man, are only to *remove* the guilt of sin; and then let this teach you, with what tears and contrition, you ought to purge yourself from it.

After this general consideration of the guilt of sin, which has done so much mischief to your nature, and exposed it to so great punishment, and made it so odious to God, that nothing less than so great an atonement of the Son of God, and so great repentance of our own, can restore us to the divine favour.

Consider next your own *particular share* in the guilt of sin. And if you would know with what zeal you ought to repent yourself, consider how you would exhort another sinner to repentance; and what repentance and amendment you would expect from him, whom you judged to be the *greatest sinner* in the world.

Now this case, every man may justly reckon to be his own. And you may fairly look upon yourself to be the greatest sinner that you *know* in the world.

For though you may know abundance of people to be guilty of some gross sins, with which you cannot charge yourself, yet you may justly condemn yourself, as the greatest sinner that you *know*. And that for these following reasons:

First, Because you *know more* of the folly of your own heart, than you do of other people's; and can charge yourself with *various sins*, that you only know of yourself, and cannot be *sure* that other sinners are guilty of them. So that as you know more of the *folly*, the *baseness*, the *pride*, the *deceitfulness* and *negligence* of your own heart, than you do of anyone's else, so you have just reason to consider yourself as the greatest sinner that you know: Because you know more of the *greatness* of your own sins, than you do of other people's.

Secondly, The greatness of our guilt arises chiefly, from the greatness of God's goodness towards us, from the particular

graces and *blessings*, the *favours*, the *lights*, and *instructions*, that we have received from him.

Now as these graces and blessings, and the multitude of God's favours towards us, are the great aggravations of our sins against God, so they are *only known* to ourselves. And therefore every sinner *knows more* of the *aggravations* of his own guilt, than he does of other people's ; and consequently may justly look upon himself to be the greatest sinner that he knows.

How good God has been to other sinners, what *light* and *instruction* he has vouchsafed to them ; what blessings and *graces* they have received from him ; how often he has touched their hearts with holy inspirations, you cannot tell. But all this you know of yourself, therefore you know greater aggravations of your own guilt, and are able to charge yourself with greater ingratitude, than you can charge upon other people.

And this is the reason, why the *greatest saints* have in all ages condemned themselves as the greatest sinners, because they knew *some aggravations* of their own sins, which they could not know of other people's.

The right way therefore to fill your heart with true contrition, and a deep sense of your own sins, is this : You are not to consider, or compare the *outward form*, or *course* of your life, with that of other people's, and then think yourself to be less sinful than they, because the outward course of your life is less sinful than theirs.

But in order to know your own guilt, you must consider your own particular circumstances, your *health*, your *sickness*, your *youth*, or *age*, your *particular* calling, the happiness of your *education*, the degrees of *light* and *instruction* that you have received, the *good men* that you have conversed with, the *admonitions* that you have had, the *good books* that you have read, the numberless multitude of divine *blessings*, *graces*, and *favours* that you have received, the *good motions* of grace that you have resisted, the *resolutions* of amendment that you have often broken, and the *checks* of conscience that you have disregarded.

For it is from these circumstances, that everyone is to state the *measure* and *greatness* of his own guilt. And as you know only these circumstances of your own sins, so you must necessarily know how to charge yourself with higher degrees of guilt, than you can charge upon other people.

God Almighty knows greater sinners, it may be, than you are; because he sees and knows the circumstances of all men's sins : But your own heart, if it is faithful to you, can discover no guilt so great as your own ; because it can only see in you those circumstances, on which great part of the guilt of sin is founded.

You may see sins in other people, that you cannot charge upon yourself; but then you know a number of circumstances of your own guilt, that you cannot lay to their Charge.

And perhaps that person that appears at such a distance from your virtue, and so odious in your eyes, would have been much better than you are, had he been altogether in your circumstances, and received all the same favours and graces from God that you have.

This is a very *humbling reflection*, and very proper for those people to make, who measure their virtue, by comparing the outward course of their lives with that of other people's.

For look at whom you will, however different from you in his way of life, yet you can never know, that he has resisted *so much* divine grace as you have, or that in all your circumstances, he would not have been *much truer* to his duty than you are.

Now this is the reason why I desired you to consider, how you would exhort that man to confess and bewail his sins, whom you looked upon to be one of the *greatest sinners*.

Because if you will deal justly, you must fix the charge at *home*, and look no further than *yourself*. For God has given no one any power of knowing the *true greatness* of any sins, but his own: and therefore the greatest sinner that everyone *knows*, is himself.

You may easily see, how such a one in the outward course of his life breaks the laws of God; but then you can never say, that had you been exactly in all his circumstances, that you should not have broken them more than he has done.

A serious and frequent reflection upon these things, will mightily tend to humble us in our own eyes, make us very apprehensive of the greatness of our own guilt, and very tender in censuring and condemning other people.

For who would dare to be severe against other people, when, for ought he can tell, the severity of God may be more due to him, than to them? Who would exclaim against the guilt of others, when he considers that he knows more of the greatness of his own guilt, than he does of theirs?

How often you have resisted God's holy Spirit; how many motives to goodness you have disregarded; how many particular blessings you have sinned against; how many good resolutions you have broken; how many checks and admonitions of conscience you have stifled, you very well know: But how often this has been the case of other sinners, you know not. And therefore the greatest sinner that you know, must be yourself.

Whenever therefore you are *angry* at sin or sinners, whenever you *read* or *think* of God's indignation and wrath at wicked men,

let this teach you to be the most severe in your censure, and most humble and contrite in the acknowledgment and confession of your own sins, because you know of no sinner equal to yourself.

Lastly, to conclude this chapter: Having thus examined and confessed your sins at this hour of the evening, you must afterwards look upon yourself, as still obliged to betake yourself to prayer again, just before you go to *bed.*

The subject that is most proper for your prayers at that time, is *death.* Let your prayers therefore, then be wholly upon it, reckoning up all the *dangers*, *uncertainties*, and *terrors* of death; let them contain everything, that can affect and awaken your mind into just apprehensions of it. Let your petitions be all for right sentiments of the *approach* and *importance* of death; and beg of God, that your mind may be possessed with such a sense of its *nearness*, that you may have it always in your thoughts, do everything as in sight of it, and make every day, a day of preparation for it.

Represent to your imagination, that your *bed* is your *grave;* that all things are ready for your interment; that you are to have no more to do with this world; and that it will be owing to God's great Mercy, if you ever see the light of the Sun again, or have another day to add to your works of piety.

And then commit yourself to sleep, as into the hands of God; as one that is to have no more opportunities of doing good; but is to awake amongst spirits that are separate from the body, and waiting for the judgment of the last great day.

Such a solemn resignation of yourself into the hands of God every evening, and parting with all the world, as if you were never to see it any more, and all this in the silence and darkness of the night, is a practice that will soon have excellent effects upon your spirit.

For this time of the night is exceeding proper for such prayers, and meditations; and the likeness which *sleep* and *darkness* have to *death*, will contribute very much, to make your thoughts about it the more deep and affecting. So that I hope, you will not let a time, so proper for such prayers, be ever passed over without them.

Chapter XXIV.

The Conclusion. Of the Excellency and Greatness of a devout Spirit.

I HAVE now finished what I intended in this Treatise. I have explained the nature of devotion, both as it signifies a life devoted to God, and as it signifies a regular method of daily prayer. I have now only to add a word or two, in recommendation of a life governed by this spirit of devotion.

For though it is as reasonable to suppose it the desire of all Christians to arrive at Christian Perfection, as to suppose, that all sick men desire to be restored to perfect health; yet experience shows us, that nothing wants more to be pressed, repeated, and forced upon our minds, than the plainest rules of Christianity.

Voluntary poverty, *virginity*, and devout *retirement*, have been here recommended, as things not necessary, yet highly beneficial to those that would make the way to perfection the most easy and certain. But Christian perfection itself is tied to no particular form of life; but is to be attained, though not with the same ease, in every state of life.

This has been fully asserted in another place; where it has been shown, that Christian perfection *calls no one* (necessarily) *to a Cloister, but to the full performance of those duties, which are necessary for all Christians, and common to all states of life.**

So that the whole of the matter is plainly this: *Virginity*, *voluntary poverty*, and such other *restraints* of *lawful* things, are not necessary to Christian perfection; but are much to be commended in those, who choose them as *helps* and *means* of a more *safe* and *speedy* arrival at it.

It is only in this manner, and in this sense, that I would recommend any particularity of life; not as if perfection consisted in it, but because of its great tendency to produce and support the *true spirit* of Christian perfection.

But the thing which is here pressed upon all, is a life of *great* and *strict* devotion; which, I think, has been sufficiently shown to be equally the duty and happiness of all orders of men. Neither is there anything in any particular state of life, that can be justly pleaded as a reason for any abatements of a devout spirit.

* 'Christian Perfection,' p. 2.

But because in this *polite* age of ours, we have so *lived away* the spirit of devotion, that many seem afraid even to be suspected of it, imagining *great devotion* to be great *bigotry;* that it is founded in *ignorance* and *poorness* of spirit, and that *little*, *weak*, and *dejected* minds, are generally the greatest proficients in it:

It shall here be fully shown, that *great* devotion is the *noblest* temper of the *greatest* and *noblest* souls; and that they who think it receives any advantage from *ignorance* and *poorness* of spirit, are themselves not a little, but entirely ignorant of the nature of devotion, the nature of God, and the nature of themselves.

People of *fine parts* and *learning* or of great knowledge in *worldly matters*, may perhaps think it hard to have their *want* of devotion charged upon their *ignorance*. But if they will be content to be tried by Reason and Scripture, it may soon be made appear, that a *want* of devotion, wherever it is, either amongst the learned or unlearned, is founded in *gross ignorance*, and the *greatest blindness* and *insensibility* that can happen to a rational creature.

And that devotion is so far from being the effect of a *little* and *dejected* mind, that it must and will be always *highest* in the most *perfect* natures.

And *first*, Who reckons it a sign of a *poor*, *little* mind, for a man to be full of *reverence* and *duty* to his parents, to have the truest *love* and *honour* for his *friend*, or to excel in the *highest instances* of gratitude to his *benefactor?*

Are not these tempers in the *highest* degree, in the most exalted and perfect minds?

And yet what is *high devotion*, but the highest exercise of these tempers, of *duty*, *reverence*, *love*, *honour*, and gratitude to the amiable, glorious *parent*, *friend*, and *benefactor* of all mankind?

Is it a true greatness of mind, to reverence the authority of your parents, to fear the displeasure of your friend, to dread the reproaches of your benefactor? and must not this *fear*, and *dread*, and *reverence*, be much more just, and reasonable, and honourable, when they are in the *highest degree* towards God?

Now as the higher these tempers are, the more are they esteemed amongst men, and are allowed to be so much the *greater proofs* of a true greatness of mind; so the higher and greater these same tempers are towards God, so much the more do they prove the nobility, excellence, and greatness of the mind.

So that so long as *duty* to parents, *love* to friends, and *gratitude* to benefactors, are thought great and honourable tempers; devotion, which is nothing else but duty, love, and gratitude to God, must have the highest place amongst our highest virtues.

If a *Prince*, out of his *mere goodness*, should send you a pardon

by one of his *slaves*, would you think it a part of your duty to receive the *slave* with marks of *love*, *esteem*, and gratitude for his great kindness, in bringing you so great a gift; and at the same time think it a *meanness* and *poorness* of spirit, to show *love*, *esteem*, and *gratitude* to the Prince, who of his own goodness freely sent you the pardon?

And yet this would be as reasonable, as to suppose, that love, esteem, honour, and gratitude, are *noble tempers*, and instances of a *great soul*, when they are paid to our fellow-creatures; but the effects of a *poor*, *ignorant*, *dejected* mind, when they are paid to God.

Further; that part of devotion which expresses itself in *sorrowful* confessions, and *penitential* tears of a broken and contrite heart, is very far from being any sign of a *little* and *ignorant* mind.

For who does not acknowledge it an instance of an *ingenuous*, *generous*, and *brave* mind, to acknowledge a fault, and ask pardon for any offence? And are not the *finest* and *most improved* minds, the most remarkable for this excellent temper?

Is it not also allowed, that the *ingenuity* and *excellence* of a man's spirit is much shown, when his sorrow and indignation at himself rises in proportion to the folly of his crime, and the *goodness* and *greatness* of the person he has offended?

Now if things are thus, then the *greater* any man's mind is, the more he *knows* of God and himself, the more will he be disposed to prostrate himself before God, in all the *humblest acts* and expressions of repentance.

And the greater the *ingenuity*, the *generosity*, *judgment*, and *penetration* of his mind is, the more will he exercise and indulge a *passionate*, *tender* sense of God's just displeasure; and the more he knows of the greatness, the goodness, and perfection of the divine nature, the fuller of shame and confusion will he be at his own sins and ingratitude.

And on the other hand, the more *dull* and *ignorant* any soul is, the more *base* and *ungenerous* it naturally is, the more *senseless* it is of the goodness and purity of God; so much the more averse will it be to all acts of *humble confession* and *repentance*.

Devotion therefore is so far from being best suited to *little ignorant* minds, that a *true elevation* of soul, a *lively sense* of honour, and *great knowledge* of God and ourselves, are the greatest *natural helps* that our devotion hath.

And on the other hand, it shall here be made appear by variety of arguments, that *indevotion* is founded in the most excessive ignorance.

And, *First*, Our blessed Lord, and his Apostles, were eminent

instances of great and frequent devotion. Now if we will grant, (as all Christians must grant) that their great devotion was founded in a true knowledge of the nature of devotion, the nature of God, and the nature of man; then it is plain, that all those that are insensible of the duty of devotion, are in this excessive state of ignorance, they neither know God, nor themselves, nor devotion.

For if a right knowledge in these three respects, produces great devotion, as in the case of our Saviour and his Apostles, then a neglect of devotion must be chargeable upon ignorance.

Again; how comes it that most people have recourse to devotion, when they are in sickness, distress, or fear of death? Is it not because this state shows them *more* of the want of God, and their own weakness, than they perceive at other times? Is it not because their infirmities, their approaching end, *convince* them of something, which they did not *half perceive* before?

Now if devotion at these seasons, is the effect of a *better knowledge* of God, and ourselves, then the neglect of devotion at other times, is always owing to great ignorance of God, and ourselves.

Further; as indevotion is ignorance, so it is the most *shameful* ignorance, and such as is to be charged with the *greatest folly*.

This will fully appear to anyone that considers, by what rules we are to judge of the excellency of any knowledge, or the shamefulness of any ignorance.

Now *knowledge* itself would be no *excellence*, nor ignorance any *reproach* to us, but that we are *rational* creatures.

But if this be true, then it follows plainly, that that knowledge which is most *suitable* to our rational nature, and which most concerns us, as such, to know, is our *highest*, *finest* knowledge; and that ignorance which relates to things that are most *essential* to us, as rational creatures, and which we are most concerned to know, is, of all others, the most *gross* and *shameful* ignorance.

If therefore there be any things that concern us more than others, if there be any truths that are more to us than all others, he that has the fullest knowledge of these things, that sees these truths in the *clearest*, *strongest* light, has, of all others, *as a rational creature*, the clearest understanding, and the strongest parts.

If therefore our relation to God be our *greatest relation*, if our advancement in his favour be our *highest advancement*, he that has the *highest notions* of the excellence of this relation, he that most *strongly* perceives the *highest worth*, and great *value* of holiness and virtue, that judges everything *little*, when compared with it, proves himself to be master of the *best*, and *most excellent* knowledge.

If a *Judge* had fine skill in *painting*, *architecture*, and *music*, but at the same time had *gross* and *confused* notions of *equity*, and a *poor*, *dull* apprehension of the *value* of justice, who would scruple to reckon him a *poor ignorant* Judge?

If a *Bishop* should be a man of great address and skill in the arts of preferment, and understanding how to raise and enrich his family in the world, but should have no *taste* or *sense* of the maxims and principles of the *saints* and *fathers* of the Church; if he did not conceive the holy nature, and great obligations of his calling, and judge it better to be *crucified* to the world, than to live idly in *pomp* and *splendour*, who would scruple to charge such a Bishop with want of understanding?

If we do not judge, and pronounce after this manner, our reason and judgment are but empty sounds.

But now, if a *Judge* is to be reckoned *ignorant*, if he does not feel and perceive the *value*, and *worth* of justice; if a *Bishop* is to be looked upon as *void* of understanding, if he is more *experienced* in other things, than in the *exalted virtues* of his Apostolical calling; then all *common Christians* are to be looked upon as *more* or *less* knowing, accordingly as they know more or less of those great things, which are the *common* and *greatest* concern of all Christians.

If a *Gentleman* should fancy that the *Moon* is no bigger than it appears to the *eye*, that it shines with its *own light*, that all the *Stars* are only so many spots of light; if after reading books of *Astronomy*, he should still continue in the same opinion, most people would think he had but a poor apprehension.

But if the same person should think it better to provide for a *short life* here, than to prepare for a *glorious eternity* hereafter, that it was better to be *rich*, than to be *eminent* in piety, his *ignorance* and *dulness* would be too great to be compared to anything else.

There is no knowledge that deserves so much as the name of it, but that which we call *judgment*.

And that is the most clear and improved understanding, which *judges* best of the *value* and *worth* of things. All the rest is but the capacity of an *animal*, it is but mere *seeing* and *hearing*.

And there is no excellence of any knowledge in us, till we exercise our *judgment*, and judge well of the *value* and *worth* of things.

If a man had *eyes* that could see beyond the *Stars*, or pierce into the *heart* of the earth, but could not see the things that were before him, or discern anything that was serviceable to him, we should reckon that he had but a *very bad sight*.

If another had *ears* that received sounds from the world in the

Moon, but could hear nothing that was said or done upon earth, we should look upon him as *bad* as *deaf*.

In like manner, if a man has a *memory* that can retain a great many things; if he has a *wit* that is *sharp* and *acute* in arts and sciences, or an imagination that can wander agreeably in *fictions*, but has a *dull, poor* apprehension of his *duty* and *relation* to God, of the *value* of piety, or the *worth* of moral virtue, he may very justly be reckoned to have a *bad understanding*. He is but like the man, that can only *see* and *hear* such things as are of no benefit to him.

As certain therefore as piety, virtue, and eternal happiness are of the most concern to man, as certain as the immortality of our nature, and relation to God, are the most glorious circumstances of our nature, so certain is it, that he who *dwells most* in contemplation of them, whose heart is *most affected* with them, who sees *furthest* into them, who best comprehends the *value* and *excellency* of them, who judges all worldly attainments to be *mere bubbles* and *shadows*, in comparison of them, proves himself to have of all others, the *finest understanding*, and the *strongest judgment*.

And if we do not reason after this manner, or allow this method of reasoning, we have no arguments to prove, that there is any such thing as a *wise man*, or a *fool*.

For a man is proved to be a *natural*, not because he wants any of his *senses*, or is incapable of *everything*, but because he has no *judgment*, and is entirely ignorant of the *worth* and *value* of things. He will perhaps choose a *fine coat* rather than a *large estate*.

And as the essence of *stupidity* consists in the entire want of *judgment*, in an ignorance of the *value* of things, so on the other hand, the essence of wisdom and knowledge must consist in the *excellency* of our judgment, or in the knowledge of the *worth* and *value* of things.

This therefore is an undeniable proof, that he who knows *most* of the value of the best things, who judges, most rightly of the things which are of most concern to him, who had rather have his soul in a state of Christian perfection, than the greatest share of worldly happiness, has the *highest wisdom*, and is at the furthest distance from men that are *naturals*, than any knowledge can place him.

On the other hand, he that can talk the *learned* languages, and repeat a great deal of *History*, but prefers the *indulgence* of his body to the *purity* and *perfection* of his soul, who is *more* concerned to get a *name*, or an *estate* here, than to live in eternal glory hereafter, is in the nearest state to that *natural*, who chooses a *painted coat*, rather than a *large estate*.

He is not called a *natural* by men, but he must appear to God, and heavenly Beings, as in a more excessive state of stupidity, and will sooner or later certainly appear so to himself.

But now if this be undeniably plain, that we cannot prove a man to be a *fool*, but by showing that he has no knowledge of things that are *good* and *evil* to himself, then it is undeniably plain, that we cannot prove a man to be *wise*, but by showing that he has the *fullest* knowledge of things, that are his *greatest* good, and his greatest evil.

If therefore God be our greatest good; if there can be no good but in his favour, nor any evil but in departing from him, then it is plain, that he who judges it the best thing he can do to please God to the utmost of his power, who worships and adores him with all his heart and soul, who had rather have a *pious mind*, than all the *dignities* and *honours* in the world, shows himself to be in the *highest state* of human wisdom.

To proceed; we know how our blessed Lord acted in an human body; it was 'his meat and drink, to do the will of his Father 'which is in heaven.'

And if any number of heavenly spirits, were to leave their habitations in the light of God, and be for a while united to human bodies, they would certainly tend towards God in all their actions, and be as heavenly as they could, in a state of flesh and blood.

They would certainly act in this manner, because they would know that God was the *only good* of all spirits; and that whether they were *in* the body, or *out* of the body, in *heaven*, or on *earth*, they must have every degree of their greatness and happiness from God alone.

All human spirits, therefore, the *more exalted* they are, the more they *know* their divine Original, the *nearer* they come to heavenly spirits; by so much the more will they live to God in all their actions, and make their whole life a *state of devotion.*

Devotion, therefore, is the greatest sign of a great and noble *genius*, it supposes a soul in its *highest state* of knowledge; and none but *little* and *blinded* minds, that are sunk into *ignorance* and *vanity*, are destitute of it.

If an human spirit, should imagine some *mighty Prince* to be greater than God, we should take it for a *poor, ignorant* creature; all people would acknowledge such an imagination to be the height of stupidity.

But if this same *human spirit*, should think it better to be devoted to some mighty *Prince*, than to be devoted to God, would not this still be a greater proof of a poor, ignorant, and blinded nature?

Yet this is what all people do, who think anything *better, greater*, or *wiser*, than a devout life.

So that which way soever we consider this matter, it plainly appears, that devotion is an instance of *great judgment*, of an *elevated nature;* and the want of *devotion* is a certain proof of the want of *understanding*.

The greatest spirits of the heathen world, such as *Pythagoras, Socrates, Plato, Epictetus, Marcus Antoninus, &c.*, owed all their *greatness* to the spirit of devotion.

They were full of God; their wisdom and deep contemplations tended only to deliver men from the vanity of the world, the slavery of bodily passions, that they might act as *spirits* that came from God, and were soon to return to him.

Again; To see the dignity and greatness of a devout spirit, we need only compare it with other tempers, that are chosen in the room of it.

St. *John* tells us, that 'all in the world' (that is, all the tempers of a worldly life) 'is the lust of the flesh, the lust of the 'eyes, and the pride of life.'

Let us therefore consider, what *wisdom* or *excellency* of mind there is required, to qualify a man for these delights.

Let us suppose a man given up to the pleasures of the body; surely this can be no sign of a *fine* mind, or an *excellent* spirit: For if he has but the temper of an *animal*, he is great enough for these enjoyments.

Let us suppose him to be devoted to *honours* and *splendours*, to be fond of *glitter* and *equipage;* now if this temper required any great *parts* or *fine* understanding, to make a man capable of it, it would prove the world to abound with *great wits*.

Let us suppose him to be in love with *riches*, and to be so eager in the pursuit of them, as never to think he has enough; now this passion is so far from supposing any *excellent sense*, or *great understanding*, that blindness and folly are the best supports that it hath.

Let us lastly suppose him in another light, not singly devoted to any of these passions, but, as it mostly happens, governed by all of them in their turns; does this show a more exalted nature, than to spend his days in the service of any one of them?

For to have a *taste* for these things, and to be devoted to them, is so far from arguing any *tolerable parts* or understanding, that they are suited to the *dullest, weakest* minds, and require only a great deal of pride and folly to be greatly admired.

But now let *Libertines* bring any such charge as this, if they can, against devotion. They may as well endeavour to charge light, with everything that belongs to darkness.

Let them but grant that there is a God, and Providence, and then they have granted enough to justify the wisdom, and support the honour of devotion.

For if there is an infinitely wise and good Creator, in whom we live, move, and have our being, whose Providence governs all things in all places, surely it must be the highest act of our *understanding* to conceive rightly of him; it must be the noblest instance of *judgment*, the most exalted temper of our nature, to worship and adore this universal Providence, to conform to its laws, to study its wisdom, and to live and act everywhere, as in the presence of this infinitely good and wise Creator.

Now he that lives thus, lives in the spirit of devotion.

And what can show such great parts, and so fine an understanding, as to live in this temper?

For if God is *wisdom*, surely he must be the wisest man in the world, who *most* conforms to the wisdom of God, who *best* obeys his Providence, who enters *furthest* into his designs, and does all he can, that God's will may be done on earth, as it is done in heaven.

A devout man makes a true use of his reason; he sees through the *vanity* of the world, discovers the *corruption* of his nature, and the *blindness* of his passions. He lives by a *law* which is not visible to *vulgar eyes;* he enters into the world of *spirits;* he compares the greatest things, sets *eternity* against *time;* and chooses rather to be for ever great in the presence of God when he dies, than to have the greatest share of worldly pleasure whilst he lives.

He that is devout, is full of these *great thoughts;* he lives upon these noble reflections, and conducts himself by *rules* and *principles*, which can only be apprehended, admired, and loved by *reason*.

There is nothing therefore that shows so great a *genius*, nothing that so raises us above *vulgar spirits*, nothing that so plainly declares an *heroic* greatness of mind, as great devotion.

When you suppose a man to be a *saint*, or all devotion, you have raised him as much above all other conditions of life, as a *Philosopher* is above an *animal*.

Lastly, *Courage* and *bravery* are words of a great sound, and seem to signify an *heroic* spirit; but yet *humility*, which seems to be the *lowest*, *meanest* part of devotion, is a more certain argument of a *noble* and *courageous* mind.

For humility contends with greater enemies, is more constantly engaged, more violently assaulted, bears more, suffers more, and requires greater courage to support itself, than any instances of worldly bravery.

A man who dares be poor and contemptible in the eyes of the world, to approve himself to God; who resists and rejects all human glory, who opposes the clamour of his passions, who meekly puts up with all injuries and wrongs, and dares stay for his reward till the invisible hand of God gives to everyone their proper places; endures a much *greater trial*, and exerts a *nobler fortitude*, than he that is bold and daring in the fire of battle.

For the boldness of a soldier, if he is a stranger to the spirit of devotion, is rather *weakness* than fortitude; it is at best but *mad passion*, and heated spirits, and has no more true valour in it than the fury of a *tiger*.

For as we cannot lift up a hand, or stir a foot, but by a power that is lent us from God; so bold actions that are not directed by the laws of God, as so many executions of his will, are no more true bravery, than *sedate malice* is Christian *patience*.

Reason is our *universal law*, that obliges us in all places, and at all times; and no actions have any honour, but so far as they are instances of our obedience to reason.

And it is as *base* and *cowardly*, to be bold and daring against the principle of reason and justice, as to be bold and daring in *lying* and *perjury*.

Would we therefore exercise a *true fortitude*, we must do all in the spirit of *devotion*, be valiant against the corruptions of the *world*, and the lusts of the *flesh*, and the temptations of the *devil:* For to be daring and courageous against these enemies, is the noblest bravery that an human mind is capable of.

I have made this digression, for the sake of those, who think a great devotion to be *bigotry* and *poorness* of *spirit;* that by these considerations they may see, how *poor* and *mean* all other tempers are, if compared to it; that they may see, that all worldly attainments, whether of greatness, wisdom, or bravery, are but *empty sounds;* and there is nothing *wise*, or *great*, or *noble* in an *human spirit*, but rightly to *know*, and heartily *worship* and *adore* the great God, that is the *support* and *life* of all spirits, whether in *heaven* or on *earth*.

FINIS.

UNIVERSITY of CALIFORNIA
AT
LOS ANGELES

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA LIBRARY
Los Angeles
This book is DUE on the last date stamped below.

RECD LD-URL
OCT 01 1990

JAN 0 8 199?

Form L-9
25m-2,'43(5205)

SEP 1956 X X

FEB 1957 X X

University of California, Los Angeles
L 006 025 674 0
UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY
AA 000 856 828 9